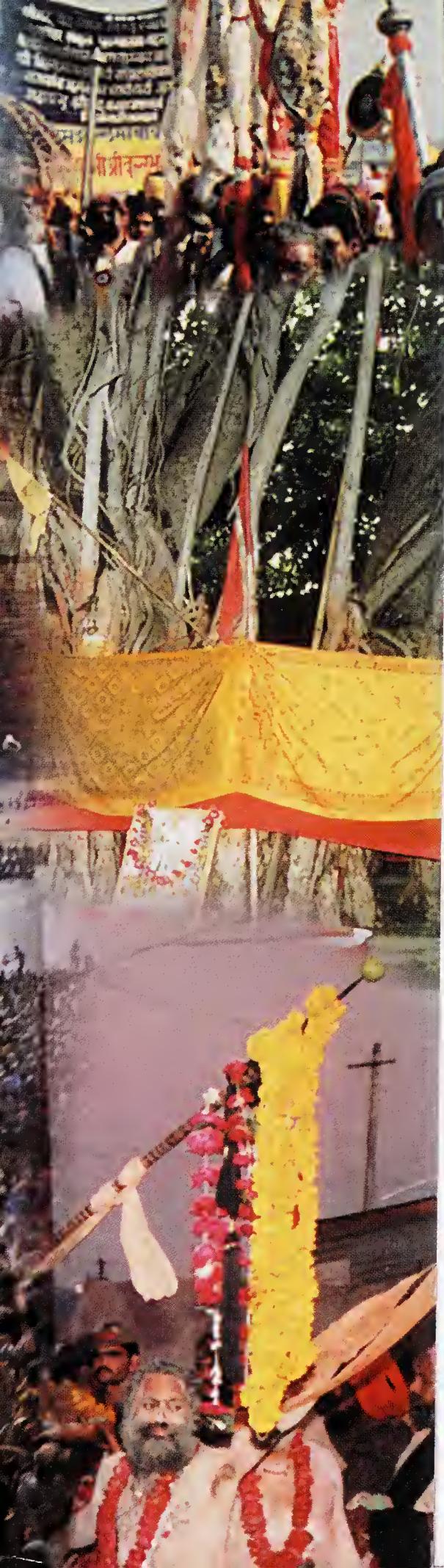


# KUMBH CITY PRAYAG

Centre for Cultural Resources and Training





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# **KUMBH CITY PRAYAG**

**Dr. S.K. Dubey**

**Centre for Cultural Resources and Training  
New Delhi**

*Dedicated  
To  
The Teertharaj  
&  
Pilgrims*

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My wife Pratibha and children Ajit, Amit, Saurabh, Smita and Pallavy have done me a good service by going through the script of the study and goading me to completing it on time.

My earlier book in Hindi, 'Teerthon Ka Teerth Prayag' too made my study for the English readers easy.

I am myself surprised at having compiled the study, which, in fact, began as early as in 1955, first as a student, and later from 1961 as a journalist. I had, however, taken care of keeping a record of what I had written during the past four decades on Kumbh occasions. This made my compilation of the study easier and it is before the readers for their evaluation.

S.K.Dubey  
35/3, Jawahar Lal Nehru Road  
Allahabad

## PREFACE

This study attempts at projecting Prayag (Allahabad) as one of the four major focal centres of eastern consciousness. As a moving open university showing a continuum of spiritual and cultural traditions of over 2500 years, Prayag is a vibrant centre of the Indian vision of the world as one family and is, in fact, an epicenter of joy, divine contact and bliss, the much sought -after goal of the Hindu way of life.

The study endeavours to explain that with deep faith in living presence of Power Sublime, pilgrims from across the country and world gather at Prayag to reap benefits of the blissful influences on the occasion of Kumbh every twelfth year and bathe in the glory of transcendental grace.

Since Vedic or even pre-Vedic period Prayag has not only been attracting great minds in various fields of humanities, but also Gods and demons alike together with all Teerth Gods of the World counted at 33 crore and ten thousand.

The trinity of Hindu Gods Brahma the creator, Vishnu the Protector, and Shiv the Destroyer are credited to have performed *yagyas* of the highest order in Prayag *kshetra* (region).

The study strives to explain that the great sages, saints, seers, *Dharma Gurus*, *Dharmacharyas*, educationists, reformers, preachers of various sects-*Shaivites*, *Vaishnavites*, *Shaktas*, *Buddhists*, *Jainis* and *Arya Samajis* and educationists in the methodology of knowing and the Knower have continued to visit Prayag during *Kumbh Parv* through two and a half millennium for the benefit of the masses.

No wonder then that India's education was a fount for many a foreign scholar who travelled to this country in search of higher spiritual knowledge. Chinese scholars, Fa Hien and Huen Tsang have recorded glowing analyses of Indian wisdom of the time and the high level of scientific knowledge that sprang from discerning experiments with nature and thought. Art and culture flourished under the reigns of enlightened monarchs and great philosophies emerged from seers, saints and *Acharyas*.

The great luminaries and mystic saints, Buddha (563-483 BC), Mahavira (6<sup>th</sup> Century BC), Shankaracharya (9<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Ramanujacharya (1137 AD), Madhvacharya (1192-1276 AD), Nimbarkacharya (13<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Bhakt Namadev (1270-1352 AD), Saint Jnaneswar (1271-1296 AD), Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia and Amir Khusro (13-14<sup>th</sup> Century AD), Swami Ramananda (1400-1476 AD), Saint Kabir (1440-1518 AD), Guru Nanak (1496-1539 AD), Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya (1473-1531 AD), Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533 AD), Goswami Tulsidas (1532-1623 AD), Swami

Thyagaraj (1764-1846 AD), and a host of other divinely inspired propounders of spiritually-based education were great reformers, and uplifters of moral and social values and religious fervour.

In the twentieth century the tradition was continued by Swami Aurobindo, Swami Vivekanand, Lokmanya Tilak, Brahmarshi Yogiraj Deoraha Baba, Saint Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari, Sripad Baba, Swami Chinmayanand, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, the Shankaracharyas of the four Mathas, A.C. Bhaktivedanta of International Krishna, Consciousness Society, Ramakrishna Mission, Satya Sai Baba Seva Sansthan, Bharat Sevashram Sangh, Roop Gaudiya Math together with a host of other socio-spiritual institutions were engaged in continuing the tradition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The study highlights that in Prayag one witnessed eco-spiritual and cultural harmony of man, mind and nature at the Sangam. This raises the human intelligence to its peak, in direct communion with God who is called *PERMANAND* perennial source of bliss, a state beyond worldly pleasures and happiness.

The spiritual-cultural tradition in Prayag is known to have been patronised since beginning by kings, priests and merchants who conserved and protected it. The acetics, aesthetics and scholars meditated, conceived and propagated and in fine tuning with their soul as well as nature, set the goal of truth, bliss and beauty, which flowered in the *Vaishnav* and *Sufi* societies. Thus Prayag is a repository of creative human vibrations. It is a centre of prolific spiritual energy.

The Sangam has been a witness to pro and anti-vedic waves as seen in the rise of Jainism, Buddhism and re-establishment of Vedic culture by Adi Shankaracharya who had humbled Bauddh Kumaril Bhatt in a public debate. Bhatt ended his life in Prayag lying in between ignited heap of husk.

Prayag is a centre of spiritual and moral education, spiritualism and morality in India and has guided political and socio- economic actions as reflected in the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi making Allahabad a vibrant centre of political activities. Prayag has a rich historical, cultural and spiritual heritage of holistic eco-cultural evolution which has not been explored fully for English readers.

Prayag (25°30' north latitude, and 81°55' east longitude) has closely been associated with the shaping and preserving of the cultural and religious traditions of the country. In spite of numerous political vicissitudes during its long history of over two thousand years, its glory as one of the foremost cultural and religious centres has remained undiminished.

Allahabad lies between the parallels of  $24^{\circ}47'$  north latitude and  $81^{\circ}21'$  east longitude. The rivers Ganga and Yamuna which unite at Prayag, divide the district into three parts: the Doab, the tract between the two rivers, the trans-Ganga tract and other the trans-Yamuna region.

In its physical features Allahabad presents a complexity which is found only in a few districts of Uttar Pradesh. The district includes, on the one hand, the tracts consisting of the ordinary alluvium of the Ganga plain, and, on the other, the hilly region in the south and west of the trans-Yamuna tract represented by the sub-divisions of the Vindhyan series. The situation and the physical features of Allahabad thus enabled it to become one of the most important regions which contributed to the formation of the history and culture of this country.

Prayag is a core centre of awakened consciousness on the bank of the Ganga, the Yamuna, the two visible rivers at the confluence, and mythical Saraswati, goddess of knowledge, key to the process of knowing and the Knower, all knowledge, pure consciousness called Brahman from Whom issues the world and in Whom it finally vanishes.

The study gives a glimpse of the important centres of faith in and around Allahabad and into its indomitable spirit of rebellion against subjugation and unfair practices as seen in the freedom movement since 1857.

It traces the genesis of the kumbh, its astrological significance, the temples as centres of sustaining faith and modern science- technological institutions, including the University of Allahabad.

The Hindu scriptures in Sanskrit from Vedas, Puranas, Shrutis and Smritis, Mahabharat, Balmikiy Ramayan to Sri Ram Charit Manas of Tulsi Das are replete with references to Prayag and *Kumbh Parv*, but no serious attempts have so far been made to project a comprehensive view of Prayag in book form to English language readers in India and abroad. This study attempts at filling this gap.

For me it is the fourth Kumbh since 1965 falling in 2001. Thus this study is a result of not only a study in Prayag but also of my personal experiences during the annual *magh mela*, *Ardh Kumbh* and *Kumbh* periods since 1955 when I came to this city as a student of intermediate. I hope this study would catch the fancy of the readers.

S. K. Dubey

## PRELUDE

One day I had a vision of Sripad Baba who is no more. He was a frequent visitor to the Magh Mela, Kumbh and Ardha Kumbh fairs. He was a saint with a difference and had set for self-role of an educator in the tradition of our great sages and ceaselessly worked for setting up a University of Eastern Consciousness.

Founder of the Vraj Academy at Vrindavan, Sripad Baba viewed the Kumbh tradition as an efficacious system of education for human transformation. He believed that this system of education was such that learning and knowledge was absorbed by direct communication between the preceptor and the disciple ensuring balanced and integrated development of the younger generation.

During my discussions with him on the subject, Sripad Baba used to quote from *Shrivatmooladakshinamurti*'s reminiscences saying: "*Behold the wonder beneath the banyan tree. The disciples are old and the Guru is young and perfect wisdom is given and received within their luminous silent communion.*"

Under the Kumbh education system, knowledge and skills were moored to character and ethics and intellectual advancement reflected faith in the real values and goal of life. This system verily brought forth-unique creative ideas for refinement of the human beings and the intellectual excellence to probe the supra mundane.

I had a vision of him telling me that he had relinquished his mortal frame, but the soul that is imperishable is at work to complete the half-done work in respect of the proposed University for Eastern Consciousness. It was in search of a suitable medium.

It was a rare communion with the Baba who quoted from *Srimad Bhagawatam*: "*Unsatisfied over his earlier creation of the lower order-animate and inanimate-the Creator eventually derived happiness by creating man, endowed as he was with the intellect for self-realisation.*"

The vision also quoted from Max Mullers' Sacred Books of the East, saying:

*"The distinction between the eternal and perishable was first realised by man; followed by the discovery within himself of the germ of the Eternal. The East was the first to discover it."*

The vision told my inner self that being a journalist it is my bounden duty to work for human welfare and transformation in a society which is bereft of moral, ethical and spiritual values and seems to have no future.

The vision warned, quoting from Paul Brunton's Search in Secret India. "*The aegis of Providence follows the footsteps of a man who sets out on a purpose other than his own.*"

My inner self replied that journalism today had become commercial, that journalists have to dance to the tune of the owners of newspapers who were proprietor Editors as well and where proprietors are not the Editors they have their stooges. Stories of violence, terrorism, corruption in high places, murder, loot, rape and, of course, items of commercial interest dominate the space in newspapers. Days are gone when the Editor had his last say and gave to the readers only that which enriched their sensibility, faith in life and inspired them to do public good. Newspapers have become commodities and have to print matter, which would boost sales.

This reply, however, did not satisfy the Baba. He said, "*The tongue is encircled by 32 sharp teeth. Yet it takes all kinds of tastes, suffering occasional bites, which, however, is the result of carelessness only. The newspaper proprietors and proprietor editors may be interested in news items that sell, yet one has enough opportunities to project positive ideas which may help readers better their lives. Working for re-establishment and regeneration of human values is one such area in which no newspaper proprietor or proprietor editor would like to interfere.*"

Baba enlightened my inner self on the basic areas of man's speculations and interest, such as nature, society and man himself as his visionary sets. He said the preoccupation with nature has resulted in development of science by the West: preoccupation with society has led to development of social philosophy in China and preoccupation with man has led to the development of psychology in India. (The Indian mind is basically psychological as is evident from various faiths of different religious orders tackling man's problems predominantly from the psychological angles.)

My inner self asked Baba, "*How do you define the Kumbh tradition or culture?*" The vision gave an enlightening answer:

*"The Kumbh culture is a confluence of moral, intellectual, spiritual attainments over the centuries. It is the most authentic repository of consciousness and through it the present draws its strength and imparts to the future the flow of continuity."*

Finding the Baba's visionary self very friendly and ready to dispel my doubts, my conscience was encouraged to say that life is full of miseries; the moments of happiness were few and far between; each step of man is towards death and yet he celebrates his birthdays.

Baba replied:

*"Our sages were very wise. They knew well that life is a mix of good and bad, pious and impure feelings. Even light and darkness have equal share, day following night and night chasing the day. But what is of significance is that the sages have directed human beings to worship light, seek light and fill themselves with light within."*

*The ancient Indian prayer says lead us from darkness to light. Our sages have made each of the 365 days in a year the day of festivity and each day has a special significance in relation to the celestial bodies, Monday is the day of the Moon, Tuesday the day of Mars, Wednesday of Mercury, Thursday of Jupiter, Friday of Venus, Saturday of Saturn and Sunday of the sun.*

The vision on its own concentrated on the significance of the Kumbh, saying that *Brahaspati* (Jupiter), the *Guru* of gods, is the deciding factor for holding the Kumbh fair at the four places, Prayag, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain. Jupiter is the God of knowledge and wisdom and is full of life-giving forces. It transits from one *rashi* to another in a period of 12 years. Sun, another life-giving God, takes only a year in transiting from one *rashi* to another.

I conveyed to Baba that this explanation was beyond comprehension and urged him to be more elaborate. He responded: *"The Kumbh tradition symbolises perpetual quest of man for truth and represents a unique effort of mankind in this direction. Our sages have watched the auspicious movement of stars in the four corners of the country and indicated places which every twelfth year becomes focal point for obtaining celestial bliss."*

The Sun in Aries and Jupiter in Leo bring importance to Ujjain for holding the Kumbh fair. When these two planets come together in Capricorn, Nasik gets the importance; the Sun in Aries and Jupiter in Aquarius confer the importance to Hardwar, while the entry of Jupiter into Aries and of the Sun and Moon in Capricorn shifts the importance to Prayag. These beneficial planetary influences are more pronounced on water which sustains it for a long time. This is why the direction to hold the Kumbh fair in close proximity of rivers.

It dawned on me that the Indian sages had studied the beneficial influence of stars on human bodies closely. If the moon can cause the ebb and flow of tides at a particular time in the ocean, it may also exercise such a pull on the human brain and cause emotional upset, then one can imagine the stimulation from the divine wisdom of Jupiter.

Then a verse in Bhagwat Geeta chapter XVIII, 46, became crystal clear to me:

*“Man attains perfection by his own duty towards him (God) from whom the activity of all things (inanimate and animate) originates and by whom all this is pervaded.”*

As explained by the vision of Sripad Baba the Kumbh tradition is a full-fledged system of education. The need of the hour is to take lessons from this ancient heritage and strengthen our modern educational system with a blend of the vibrancy from the past.

I was deeply engrossed in what the vision had revealed to me and in a reflective mood I recalled what revolutionary Saint. Aurobindo had said about education:

*“That alone would be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter his right relation with life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation as a living, separate and yet inseparable member.”*

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## THE KUMBH LEGENDS

There are three legends, which tell about the origin of the Kumbh Parv. One legend is related to Maharshi Durvasa, another to Kadru and Vinata, the two wives of Prajapati Kashyap, and the third to the churning of the sea by gods and demons. Though the first two legends too have relevance to the occasion, the third is the most popularly known.

The first legend is about Indra and the divine ring of beads given to him by Maharshi Durvasa. Indra placed it on the head of his elephant Airavat, who pulled it down with the help of its trunk and trod on it. This incident enraged Durvasa who felt humiliated at the disrespect shown to him and his divine gift.

In great rage he is said to have cursed Indra and took away his powers to cause rains, drought conditions prevailed, food crops could not be raised, and famines caused havoc among people and the gods, demons and people suffered alike. They prayed to Lord Vishnu, who suggested that both gods and demons should churn the sea in search of Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity.

As many as 14 precious jewels were obtained in the process of the churning, including poison, nectar kumbh and Lakshmi. It started raining heavily and the farming was resumed. The period of famine was over. Poison was consumed by Lord Shankar to save the living beings from extinction.

Meanwhile, the gods played a trick denying the share of *Amrit* or nectar from the Kumbh and they hid the pitcher in Naglok, the empire of serpents. It was Garud, a bird with powers over serpents, who rescued the Amrit Kumbh (nectar pitcher) and the places where it was kept while being taken to the Ksheer-Sagar (the sea of milk) from the Naglok were known as the Kumbh places.

The second legend is related to rivalry between the two wives of Prajapati Kashyap. The two entered into an argument as to whether the horses drawing the chariot of the Sun were black or white. It was decided that one who gives the wrong answer would serve the other as maid. Nagraj Vasuki was the son of Kadru and Garud the son of Vinata. Kadru played a trick asking her family of serpents to cover the horses giving them a dark appearance as a result of which Vinata declared their colour as black. Vinata lost in the argument and had to serve Kadru as a maid. Kadru had laid down a condition to free her from her bondage only after the *Amrit Kalash* (nectar pitcher) was retrieved from the Naglok by anyone.

Vinata once told her son Garud that he could free her from bondage by retrieving the nectar pitcher. Garud was successful in his attempt and with the nectar pitcher he started for the hermitage of his father, Prajapati Kashyap at Gandhamardan Mountain in the Himalayas. Vasuki Nag informed Indra, about this and he is said to have attacked Garud four times at four different locations Prayag, Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain where nectar drops are believed to have fallen, giving rise to the concept of these places being declared Kumbh points.

The third legend of the sea-churning is well known as struggle between gods and demons on taking possession of the Amrit Kumbh, Vishnu is said to have mediated assuming the form of Mohini, a beautiful woman enrapturing Gods and demons alike.

According to the *Matsy Puran*, the gods once fell under the curse of a sage and at the beginning of creation wishing to regain their lost vigour by feasting on *Amrit* (nectar), they were advised by Brahma to churn the ocean of milk. The physically weak gods could not churn the ocean by themselves and therefore, asked the *asuras* (demons), for help promising them a portion of the *Amrit*.

The gods and demons together, with the Madara mountain as churner and Nagaraj (king of serpents) Vasuki accordingly churned the ocean of milk, as the rope coiled around it. The gods caught the tail and the demons the head of the Serpent King and started churning the ocean.

As a result of this great churning, many precious things came out of the ocean. Among them were Airavat (the divine white elephant), Uchchaisrava (the divine horse), Goddess Lakshmi, Full Moon, Kaustubh Mani (a precious jewel), Apsaras (the divine singing and dancing damsels), Halahala (deadly poison), Kamadhenu (divine cow), Kalpavriksha (divine wish-fulfilling tree), and Viswakarma (the divine artisan).

The legend says that at long last Dhanwantari, the divine healer, emerged holding the most coveted *Amrit Kumbh* (jar of nectar) in his hands. There was great excitement on both sides and the gods and demons rushed to seize the Kumbh pitcher. In the melee that followed, the demons got hold of the Kumbh. Meanwhile Jayanta, son of Indra, transformed himself into a great cock and whisked the Kumbh away from the demons. And on the way to heaven, it is said, he placed the jar (kumbh) at four places, Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain. The journey to heaven with the *Amrit Kumbh* took twelve (godly) days equivalent to twelve earthly years. That is why the (*purna*) kumbh mela is held at each of these places once every twelfth year.

According to another version which occurs in *Garud Puran*, in the scramble between the gods in pursuit and the demons in flight some of the contents of the *Amrit Kumbh* spilled, and fell on the four places which were thus sanctified by the legendary event (either drops of nectar falling or the jar of nectar perched there) as places of pilgrimage.

Which of the three is the most reliable legend is difficult to decide. However, the sea-churning story based on the cause and effect pattern symbolises the fact that both good and evil forces are constantly struggling for eternal sustenance. It has received popular acceptance.

---

(Source: *Teertharaj Prayag Kumbh Mahatmya*, Gopal Dutt Shastri,  
*Acharyaji of Ramanuj sect. Matsya and Garud Puranas.*)

## ASTROLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF KUMBH

**J**upiter (*Dharma guru*) is the key planet for deciding the venue of Kumbh Parv. The Kumbh Parv occurs in Prayag when Jupiter enters Aries and the sun and the moon the Capricorn zone in the month of Magh (Jan/Feb period) on the banks of Triveni.

The Kumbh Parv at Hardwar takes place when Jupiter enters Aquarius and the sun in Aries on the banks of the Ganga.

At Ujjain the Kumbh Parv occurs when Jupiter enters Leo and the sun Aries on the banks of the Godavari. And at Nasik Kumbh Parv takes place when Jupiter and the sun enter Leo, known as *Simhastha Kumbh*, on the banks of Kshipra.

The particular year when Kumbh Parv is held at any of the four holy places is determined by reference to the almanac. At Hardwar the fair continues for about a month in *Phalgun Chaitra*. At Prayag the period is Magh (January-February) and a dip at Triveni on the new moon is very auspicious day. The dip at Ujjain on the bank of the Kshipra is fixed for the month of *Kartika* and at Nasik on the Godavari, which is said to be the Ganga of Gautama; the Parv is timed in *Sravana*.

In the case of Hardwar and Prayag, in between two *purna* (full) kumbhas an intermediate one, called the *Ardha* (half) Kumbh is also held. The *Ardha* Kumbh mela is held at Hardwar or Prayag in those years in which (*purna*) Kumbh mela is held either at Ujjain or at Nasik.

Bathing in Triveni Sangam in the month of Magh (January-February) is specially auspicious. The Pauranic history speaks of Purusarth Chatustay *Dharm* (Duty or religion) *Arth* (economy), *Kam* (sensuous longing) and *Moksha* (salvation). These needed to be understood in the context of *Pap* (evil deeds) and *Punya* (good deeds). However, this does not satisfy the scientific temperament of the present times.

Just as the nature is a part of the great universe, man is a part of the nature. That is, man is a unit of the cosmic universe, which include the Sun, Planets and sub planets (satellites or moons). The Sun is the lord of the Solar Universe, which itself is a part of another big family of celestial stars. Sun is the primal source of *Shakti* (energy) and *Prakash* (light). Thus, it represents knowledge. Other natural resources, like air, water and soil provide life force to man. These elements sustain man, ensuring his healthy survival.



Sadhus and devotees taking part in a procession at Kumbh Mela



Sadhus and devotees on the bank of Sangam in Kumbh Mela

The rites of worshipping the water bodies, like rivers and natural lakes, having a reverence for trees, mountains, helpful animals, strengthened the inter and intra relation of man with nature. There are references of a lush green forest in this city (*Prayagvan*), with its sources of medicated water in the confluence of the three rivers, which flow through the Himalayan forests, containing the medicinal quality of several natural herbs in it.

In the month of Magh, the Sun enters Capricorn (*Makar rashii*). The Lord of Capricorn is Saturn. Mythology indicates, Saturn is the son of Sun. The evil child of a good father has a sour relation with him. Sun represents life force, energy and good health. But Saturn, a malefic planet, represents sufferings and diseases. There is a cosmic conflict in the month of *Magh*.

Geographically, Prayag is in the north-centre of the country, almost in the middle. The Tropic of Cancer goes over Prayag, which means that the Sun has the shortest distance from this city, and is, therefore, in a straight line from here. Thus, bathing in the medicated waters of the Triveni Sangam basking in the winter Sun thereafter, strengthens life making it disease free.

For instance in the year (2000), the month of *Magh* began on at Saturday (Jan. 22, 2000). The horoscope at sunrise was:

Sun in the first house, with Moon and Ketu. While Moon signifies water and land, *Ketu* represents air; Sun, the source of energy is a ball of fire. These three primal elements control all life on this planet. In such a constellation even three baths in three days are sufficient to wash away the sins (negative forces, like diseases and sufferings), resulting from the evil effects of Saturn. Such is the intensity of sunlight in the month of Magh at Prayag, according to astrologer and Tantrik Dr. Ram Naresh Tripathi.

Why is Kumbh Mela such an auspicious event? It occurs every twelfth year alternating between the four sacred places Nasik, Ujjain, Hardwar and Prayag. The occasion is not determined by any mundane event but by the concurrent entry of Jupiter and Sun in specific Rasis. Jupiter is venerated right from Rigvedic period as the God of wisdom and knowledge and Lord of *Mantras*. Since the Cosmos is an organic whole, events and objects must be interrelated. Planetary influence on mundane objects is the basic tenet of Astrology, waiting for as many as twelve years for a particular juxtaposition of Jupiter and Sun in the celestial region must connote a special significance in the celebration of the Kumbh Parv.

Jupiter exerts a great influence on earth- a much smaller planet- and more significantly a special influence on the sensitive human beings, as believed in time-honoured astrological faith. Practice, belief and faith through the centuries is proof that the impact of Jupiter in Aries and Sun and Moon in Acquarius during the Kumbh is exerted through the medium of water as one of the five elements. Water is prone to receive durable influence by the pull of heavenly bodies as is evidenced by the waxing and waning tides of the ocean. If even the moon, a speck in the Solar system, can exercise on particular dates so great a pull on the earth as to cause vibrant stirs in the human brain and emotional upset, the vast influence of Jupiter on human activities can readily be imagined.

Indian sages have devised the congregation of humanity on the Kumbh occasions and prescribed sacramental baths in holy rivers so that they may receive stimulation from the divine wisdom of Jupiter by his influence exerted through the medium of water.

The ruling planet of Capricorn zone is Saturn, known as star of destruction. The Sun represents mind and the moon heart. Jupiter blesses this unity of mind and heart from his position in Aries, arousing spiritual feelings among the visitors to Prayag. This is the significance of Prayag Kumbh Parv as explained in the Hindu scriptures.

Capricorn is the planet of water. The Sun and the moon come nearer to the earth and Prayag is so situated in the range of earth as to help these planets shower their blissful influences on all creatures on *Makar Sankranti* and *Mauni Amavasya*. These influences are more pronounced on water and this is why devotees camp on the river bank.

Astrologers say that Jupiter is the star of renunciation and spiritualism. When it enters Aries it destroys the evil effects of Venus, the ruling star of Aries. Venus is the *guru* of demons. Thus Jupiter, the *guru* of Gods, defeats or establishes good rapport with the *guru* of demons. The reigning star of Capricorn and Acquarius is Saturn, which is full of anti-life forces. The sun and the moon by entering into the Capricorn zone destroy the evil effects of Saturn.

Jupiter from his position in Aries directly gazes the Sun and the Moon in the Capricorn zone and gives them vigour and this constellation of stars fully charged with life-giving forces make pronounced effect on water and hence the direction for holding the Kumbh fair at the Sangam.

The spiritual significance of the Kumbh is that Jupiter, the planet of spiritualism inspires spiritual feelings and the soul and mind unite to let these spiritual feelings

blossom for the day of fulfillment. The moon derives vigour from the Sun. and Jupiter, the spiritual *Guru*, blesses their unity for the seekers of initiation. This is why initiation is a great tradition in Prayag.

The Rigveda refers to “Hrid (heart) and Manisa (mind) frequently, informs Satya Prakash Singh in his article on Conscious Introversion and Divine Intimations in the Rigveda’ in “*Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth*, brought out by *Akhil Bharatiya Sanskrit Parishad*, Lucknow, and published by the *Sammelan Mudranalaya*, Prayag on Sept. 7, 1967.

He writes: *This phrase (Hrda Manisa) occurs frequently in the Rigveda. There it also alternates with “hrda’ manasa, hrda manasa manisa.*

Hrt or heart has always been taken in the subsequent literature as the seat of the psyche. For the sake of convenience we have to take into account, on the lowermost point, the *Yogopanisads*. ‘In the middle of the heart-plexus’, the *Dhyanbindupanisad* says, ‘one should meditate on the Lord who is designed by the word Om and is of the shape of an unmoving flame of lamp, merely thumb-sized, constant.

“*According to another Upanisad, the heart-plexus is the seat of imperishable light of consciousness. The Amritabindupanisad defines the absolute state as that in which everything is reduced to the essence of the self through restraining the mind in the heart.*”

This explains that the heart signifies the psyche or inner being and pure intellect controls and supervises the inner actions. Jupiter being the *Dharma Guru* helps combine intellect with heart for inner transformation into wakefulness. This may be described as the process of conscious introversion, or inner vision of both heart and mind.

This inner experience leading to the state of *Samadhi*, perfect communion with God, the ocean of peace, is the ultimate aim but great minds have interpreted it differently on the basis of their own experiences. It has rightly been said that *Brahman is one but wise men have interpreted Him as they have experienced in their Sadhana (inner vibrations).*

## THE FIFTH 'KUMBH' AT KUMBHAKONAM

Most people know about four Kumbh places, Prayag, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik, but little is known about a similar Kumbh at Kumbhakonam in Tamil Nadu. This Kumbh Parv which, comes every twelfth year, is equally significant.

The Kumbh spot is situated on the bank of Godawari river at 20 km distance from Mayavaram, not far away from the sea shore near Chidambaram.

Sometimes the water level of the Godavari river goes down extremely. In such a situation the pilgrims take dips in Mahamaghram lake. It is believed that Ganga appears in the lake on the occasion of Mahamakham Kumbh Parv there.

According to another legend, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godawari, Kauveri, Mahanadi, Payoshwani and Saryu, nine rivers known as Nine Ganga-appear in the lake for the benefit of pilgrims at Kumbh Parv there. The trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv also visit this place on the Kumbh Parv, according to the legend. The festival is known as Mahamakham.

The Kumbh Parv at this place too is related to the positioning of Jupiter. It occurs when Jupiter enters Leo and the Sun Acquarius in the month of Magh of the Hindu calendar in *Makh Nakshatra* on full moon night.

In Kumbhakonam the main deities are Kumbheshwar Lingam, Sharangpani, Nageshwar, Ramaswami and Chakrapani. The lingam of Kumbheshwar in the main temple is of the form of a pitcher and beside it is a statue of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiv. She is worshipped here as Mangalambika.

The Sanskrit name of Kumbhakonam is Kumbhaghodam. According to a legend, Brahma had kept here a pitcher full of nectar. There was a circle near the mouth of the pitcher from which nectar oozed and spread over in a radius of five miles. This is why the place was named as Kumbhaghodam or Kumbhakonam.

According to yet another legend, Brahma (the creator) had kept here all elements that help recreation on annihilation of the entire creation in a pitcher. At the beginning of re-creation he took out the stored elements from it.

A legend informs us that Lord Shiv had appeared with a nectar pitcher when Brahma was performing a *Yagya* here. In the Middle Ages the Kamakotipeetham of

. Shankaracharya had been shifted at Kumbhakonam for some reasons. The said peeth stands there still while the Shankaracharya stays at Kanchi.

Dr Jagadish Gupta, well-known for Hindi literature, while researching on Kumbhakonam claims to have learnt from Dr Nagappa and Dr Vishwanath Aiyyer, whom he had met sometime at Vrindavan, that the fifth Kumbh place in the far south is Kumbhakonam which is a continuum of the Kumbh tradition from ancient times.

Dr Gupta says that sometime later a resident of Kumbhakonam Dr Parashuraman also in a letter to him confirmed that as in the case of Magh Mela in Prayag, Makham festival is celebrated every year in Kumbhakonam and every twelfth year Mahamakham. Lakhs of people from across the country converge there and bathe in the Mahamakham Tank. This is known as Kumbh fair of the south.

Maharshi Vedvyas, who is credited to have written 18 *Puranas*, informs about the spiritual benefit of a dip at the Kumbhakonam in *Prayag Mahatmya Shatadhyayi* which, is a part of the *Padma Puran*.

Two of the verses (8 and 9) in the Shatadhyayi make a reference to Kumbhakonam, saying that sins committed at other holy places are burnt at Kumbhakonam and those committed there at Varanasi. Sins committed even at Varanasi are burnt at Prayag.

Thus in the Pauranic age Kumbhakonam was known as a holy place and gets the first mention in the Padma Puran as a holy place capable of absolving people of the sins committed at other holy places. Yet this kumbh point did not get the popularity of the four-kumbh cities of the north.

A few years back a famed religious magazine ‘*Kalyan*’ published by the Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, brought out a special issue concentrating on holy places, known as *Teerthank*. It gives a detailed information about Kumbhakonam Kumbh Parv in the south.

## THE MYSTIQUE OF ‘KUMBH’

“Beautiful is the meeting of the white and dark (waters of the two rivers). Tulsi’s heart leaps with joy at the sight of the waves: it looks as if stray groups of calves of the divine cow are grazing.” Tulsi Das

Among the basic attractions of the Magh Mela is the surpassing beauty of its venue. The elder grandson of Wajid Ali Shah (last king of Avadh) living in exile at Garden Reach, Calcutta told Prof Parmanand (who met him in 1933) that when he had occasion to visit Allahabad-after restrictions on their movements had been relaxed-he went to the Sangam early one morning and had a glimpse of a celestial sunrise.” Bihisht NazarAya’ (Something special was visible) were his words and the same is reiterated by many eminent writers.

The Magh mela in Prayag is very exclusive. It is an annual assemblage of saints, seers and men leading family life for a month for *kalpavas*, to lead the life of renunciation, piety, compassion and pursue one’s faith.

It is myriad as people of all classes mix freely with the masses who following in the footsteps of their ancestors have been coming to Prayag since time immemorial, predating to recorded history.

In his learned article, ‘Recent History of the Mágh Mela’, Prof. Paramanand observes:

*The Magh Mela is perhaps the most interesting and attractive event in the calendar of the city’s life. It is held in the opening months (January-February) of the Christian calendar and the closing months (Magh-Phalgun) of the Vikram calendar. It is celebrated on a grander scale once every twelve year when it is called the Kumbh Mela and there is an Ardh-Kumbh midway between two Kumbhas.*

*“What distinguishes this fair from other religious fairs is its long duration, longer than a month for it must cover the whole month of Magh both by the lunar calendar and the solar.*

A beautiful town of tents and huts springs up in the Sangam area, below the Triveni bund, during the month of Magh (January-February period). The colony has all the facilities of a modern city-roads, electricity and drinking water supply, a separate general administration assisted by the police, fire brigade, medical and sanitation services, fair price shops etc.

These preparations are made for holding the Magh Mela in Prayag, which begins on January 14 with the Makar Sankranti or Paush Poornima, which ever is earlier. This annual fair with a recorded history of 450 years before Christ, is held when the Sun enters Capricorn.

It is essentially a bathing fair. The most important bathing festivals are the Makar Sankranti, Paush Poornima, Mauni Amavasya, Basant Panchami, Maghi Poornima and the Maha Shivaratri. The Sun's Capricorn zone period from Makar Sankranti to Basant Panchami attracts millions of people from various parts of the country and even abroad.

The Mela is an annual convocation of scholars and saints who sojourn here for the duration to engage in mutual discussion on issues related to this world and the next. A considerable body of devotees also settle on the site in their own tents or in temporary hutments provided by their local priests. (*Prayagwals*), for what is called *Kalpavas*. They belong to all strata of society-mostly well-to-do and some fit to rank with the *mahants* and *mandaleshwaras* of the religious orders, in learning and piety.

Megasthenes came to Prayag in 302 BC on his way to Pataliputra, on a political mission. The famous Chinese pilgrims Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang, visited the holy city in 299 A.D. and 629 A.D., respectively, to study Buddhism.

About the Kumbh and Ardh Kumbh fair, the Allahabad gazeteer of 1909 says : The great fair is held during the month of Magh at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. *Though there are certain great days, the whole of the month is considered sacred and the most orthodox bathe daily at the Triveni, fast by day, abstain from cereal, such persons earning the title of Kalpavasi or "he who has resolved to abide" and these reside continually within the sacred precincts of the Sangam.*

Mahatma Buddha visited one of the Kumbh fairs some 450 years before the birth of Christ and established the supremacy of Baudh religion on the Vedic religion and spread it all around.

Prayag was under the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya who was enthroned as the king of Magadh 319 years before Christ. A Greek guest Megasthanese had visited Prayag then and given description of Prayag as the place of pilgrimage.

Ashoka, the great, was also a Buddhist. He had been enthroned as the Magadh King 273 years before the Christ. Prayag remained under the Magadh rulers as well.

Fahien was the first Chinese traveller to visit Prayag Kumbh fair in the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya in the fourth-fifth century and another Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, visited Prayag in the seventh century. Both have given graphic description of rituals at the Kumbh fair and the great tradition of renunciation at Prayag.

Hiuen Tsang in his description of the mela which he had seen for himself in 644 A.D. has said, *'The entire mela was organised in an area of five miles and about five lakhs of people had gathered before King Harshyanardhana of Thaneshwar reached the mela. There was a decorated square barricading of 1,000 steps of bamboos where the jewels, gold and silver were stored for distribution. About 100 temporary houses were constructed for shelter of pilgrims.'*

On the northern side of the Ganga the King used to stay in a camp, on the western bank king of Vallabhi and on the northern side of the Yamuna the King of Assam stayed in a camp. The proceedings of the assembly started with a procession led by Dhruv Bhatt on an elephant, followed by all officers and military personnel of the Maharaja, the Beal's Buddhist records add.

Hiuen Tsang has described Prayag as a Hindu city which contained only two small Buddhist monasteries. The King distributed his entire treasury, his belongings, costly jewels and even his royal garments. Thereafter he asked his sister to provide him clothes. He says that there were 50 flourishing Hindu temples at Prayag.

The Muslim chronicler Badaoni, wrote about Prayag in 1575, saying that Hindus consider this a holy place and with the object of obtaining the rewards, which are permitted in their creed, of which transmigration is one of the most promised features, they submit themselves to all kinds of tortures. Some place their brainless heads under saws, others split their deceitful tongues into two, others enter hell by casting themselves down into the deep river from the top of a high tree."

He must have meant the Akshaiyavat, the undying banyan tree, now within the premises of the Allahabad fort. Several Muslim and Persian writers have described Akshaiyavat as the "Tree of Prayag". In olden days, it was believed that a jump to death from it brought salvation.

In 1895, Mark Twain, one of the greatest American humorists, visited Prayag. He later expressed regret over the fact that he had to stay in the Civil Lines and could not visit the crowded areas of the city where the majority of the people lived. According to him Allahabad means ‘City of God’. It is a town of wide avenues and noble distances and is comely and alluring and full of suggestions of comfort and leisure and of the serenity which a good conscience buttressed by a sufficient bank account gives.

Primarily an assembly of sadhus and mahatmas, the Kumbh Mela in its present form was further institutionalised by the great Adi Shankaracharya. He classified the Hindu ascetics into ten sects and ordained the heads of these sects to assemble regularly at the Kumbh mela, not only for maintaining mutual contact among themselves but also for exchanging experiences in their divine quest.

Lay people also responded enthusiastically to the “call of the Kumbh Mela” for it gave them two benefits: a rare opportunity to come into close contact with the visiting saints and sages for fresh spiritual inspiration and bathing in the sacred rivers. Some of the *mahatmas* who do their penance and meditation in forests and caves in the High Himalayas and do not normally descend down on the plains, also attend the Kumbh mela.

Besides, the sadhus not only inspire the individual seekers, but use the occasion to review the existing state of society in the light of changing times for suggesting reforms, if necessary. Their guidance, although moral in nature, often carry greater sanctity and force than even royal proclamations. Millions of pilgrims who gather for the mela return home fully satisfied and convinced that they are purer and wiser.

In the stanzas of Raghuvansam, in the XIIIth Canto, poet Kalidas dwells on the sanctity of a bath at the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna. He describes its beauty in dialectical terms:

*Commingled with the flow of the Yamuna,  
The Ganga at places looks like the body of  
Shiv smeared with white ashes and decorated  
With a large dark serpent and shines.*

*Brilliantly. Purified by a bath at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna, a person attains salvation after death even without acquiring true knowledge.*

People come to Prayag for their sustained faith in good things and deeds of life and from the Sangam they learn to achieve unity in diversity. Prayag is the only place where a mighty river Yamuna loses its identity to merge into the Ganga giving birth to the Ganga-Yamuna culture of composite living for peace, tranquility and prosperity.

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF KUMBH

The word 'Kumbh', commonly used in Hindi, for a pitcher has a Sanskrit root. The word 'Kumbh' is also a trope for the human body. The soul generally associated with Brahman, who is supposed to be present in every living being can be considered synonymous with Amrit.

This indicates that Kumbh philosophy is of self-realisation. Those who participate in the Kumbh Parva, occurring every twelfth year at Prayag (Allahabad), Hardwar, Nasik and Ujjain alternating every three year at these places with a common goal from various regions, speaking diverse language are united in a cultural bond for thousands of years before the birth of Christ.

This cultural bond in quest of life reinforcing elements pre-dating to history is, in fact, not a bond but a symbol of freedom, transcending all barriers of birth and regions.

What is the concept of *moksha*, (salvation)? To me it is a symbol of an individual's conscious state of spiritualism. On the social plane democracy recognises awakening as a guiding force which being multi-dimensional works on different levels. The meeting of lakhs and crores of people at one place with a common concept and goal is an experience in itself.

The Sangam in Prayag symbolises unity as the two mighty rivers the Ganga from Gangotri and the Yamuna from Yamunotri in the Himalayas emanating from two different points and coursing separately meet at Allahabad. The unity is so perfect that the Yamuna loses its identity beyond Allahabad. This unity gives birth to mythical Saraswati, the Goddess of knowledge, and hence the Sangam is Triveni, confluence of the three rivers.

What is to be noted is the flow of inner human thought of a sea of humanity converging at a holy place on the river bank with one common goal of a dip for *moksha*. These inner feelings of sympathy, goodwill, tolerance, determination to face any odds cheerfully without any remorse or complaint flow in abundance, which becomes more inspiring than the Sangam itself. The waves of good thoughts flowing in spontaneously from various corners form a river of sublime thoughts generating celestial knowledge and bliss.

This holy assemblage which is spontaneous may be compared to water drops meeting the rivers merging their identity into the vast sheet of water. People of various regions,

castes and climes speaking different languages and dialects merge into one being partaking of the heavenly bliss of realising their dream of life for a dip at the Kumbh Parv.

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan rightly observes in her article, 'The Theory and Practice in Indian Arts' P. 24 and 25 in Baldeo Upadhyay Felicitation Volume that '*both a continuum and dialogue*' mark the Indian cultural phenomenon. She says:

*'This puzzling Jigsaw of categories or of the co-existence of levels and of the interaction and inter-penetration of levels can be solved only if we look at the Indian cultural phenomenon as a continuous movement of sheathing and of over-layering without annihilation and obliteration of levels whether in anthropological or sociological or artistic terms.'*

*'An analogy for this phenomenon can be drawn from the sphere of astronomy. Each cultural region may be seen as a sphere with an in-built state structure of all that which revolves around a regional axis. One face of this sphere is naturally like a disc. The disc has levels made up of races-linguistic, social and caste classification. There is a continuous dialogue, which takes place between these levels in a given region. Certain aspects of life style of the people are shared whether it is at the tribal level or at the highly ritualistic Brahmanical level. Each of these levels of the disc may be identified in terms of tribal, rural (grama) and nagara (urban). A movement of communication takes place amongst these levels determined by the regional axis. Along side there is a second system of communication where particular levels interact with parallel levels in other spheres. The orbit is large comprising many regional areas, but there are micro-grouping and macro-grouping of contiguous areas.'*

This is the case with the Kumbh fairs where plurality merges into singularity, the objective being purification of mind, heart and body through knowledge, rituals, fast, baths etc., the mass of people enjoying the event according to their individual perceptions and experiences.

She observes further: '*Within this orbit, one can discern a clear movement of the rhythm of a flow of a river touching each sphere or region giving it a distinctiveness at different levels and to the region as a whole and moving on with a uniform pace in time. The fixed centre which we had spoken of is still and changeless only in a very special sense of the adherence to certain principles remaining constant, invariable, but not in terms of an evolved form becoming static.'*

This idea has been beautifully explained at one place by Kabir:

*'Nadiya ek, ghat Bahutera*

*Kahai Kabir Vachan ka Phera'*

*River (God) is one, but religions (bathing ghats) to approach the river (God) are many. Only methods differ not the goal, which is the same in every religion on this earth.*

Thus the Kumbh Parv is an occasion to appreciate and recapture the vast expanse of individual consciousness in the huge congregation when meeting people itself becomes an event.

A journey makes people mobile, but a pilgrimage seeking purity of heart and mind lends it a grandeur. This is an occasion to peep into the depth of heart which gives a meaning to life finding that others too have the same mission. This impels one towards self-realisation re-inforced on the Kumbh.

Human nature is the same everywhere and it has kept on changing in search of its course for progress. Kumbh Parv offers a platform for collective endeavour for peace and bliss in life. Whether it is God or Demon, both aspire for immortality. None wants to consume poison as is evident from the mythical story of poison emanating from the churning of the sea which was rejected by all in favour of the nectar pitcher.

The Kumbh is also a symbol of Herculean effort for exploration of human soul, heart and mind in quest of elements that enrich life. This, in fact, is the philosophy of Kumbh.

*'Jatasya dhruvah Mrityur dhruvah Janma mritasya Cha'* (One who takes birth has certainly to die and one who dies is certain to take birth.) This we know on the authority of Shrimad Bhagawat Geeta. This cycle of birth, death and rebirth is believed to be unending hence the concept of salvation, freedom from the bondage of rebirth.

When death is certain, why should one take pains in pursuit of immortality? Charvak, a great Indian philosopher, who ridiculed the idea of rebirth, professed that one should enjoy worldly things fully as there is no re-birth.

Indians believe that while body is perishable, the 'soul' representing God inside the body is eternal changing body structure after a specified period. The nature of 'soul

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is peace and tranquility. The ‘soul’ in body works as a transmitter of God informing Him every moment of men’s good or bad actions to help Him award or punish for the same.

The ‘soul’ is the self which has to be realised. The unaffected ‘soul’ is a witness to whatever we do on this earth. This is why a call by Holy Scriptures to turn actions into prayer and attain the status of Aadi Jagatguru Shankaracharya, who with his awakened soul told Lord Shiv that whatever he did on this earth was nothing but His worship.

What is ‘*Atman*’? Hajime Nakamura in his article, ‘The Particular Nature of Vedanta’ says, *The word ‘atman’ originally meant ‘breath’, but it was also employed derivatively in the sense of vital force’, body and further became a word meaning ‘one’s ego’, ‘one’s self’ and further ‘soul’.*

*Pran (breadth) which exists on all planes of manifestation is the connecting link between matter and energy on the one hand and consciousness and mind on the other. Matter in association with energy cannot effect consciousness except through the agency of Pran (breadth), says I K Temni on page 258 in his book the ‘Science of Yoga’.*

Further Sir Arthur Avolon Writes on Page 8 in his book the ‘Serpent Power’:

*The etheric centre which keeps alive the physical vehicle is said to correspond with an ‘astral centre of four dimensions, but between them is loosely woven sheath of web composed of a single compressed layer of physical atoms, which prevents a premature opening up of communication between the planes.*

Regarding control on desires Temni in his Science of Yoga on page 272 says:

*The successful practice of Pratyahar (eating up of desires) gives complete control over the indriyas (the senses) in the sense that we no longer remain slaves, but become their master, switching them off and on as we switch off and on electric light in our room.*

One of the greatest yogis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Brahmarshi Deoraha Baba in his discourses used to quote saint poet Kabir’s lines regarding perfect control on desires for acquiring heavenly bliss.

*Kabir in his couplet has said that desires if not kept in check eat up men. But fakir (Saint) is one who eats up his desires. This done the mind is free for devotion to the Supreme. He is the king of kings who does not ask for anything from anyone.*

Thus Temni's views correspond to what Kabir had experienced and preached.

Since the Vedic age one may see progression of ideas in exploration of the unknown and elements which constituted clues to a healthy, prosperous and peaceful life in the world and beyond it.

Nakamura notes in the same article:

*The Vedas are chiefly concerned with religious behaviour (karman). Opposing this however the Upanisads regard 'knowledge' as important. Speculation in quest of the Absolute was continued for generations, and at first, some of the items and elements related to the religious ceremonies, had been regarded as absolute; but finally they came to assume that the 'Atman' or the 'Brahman' was the absolute; here the philosophy of Upanisads reached its peak.*

The Upanisads argued, 'If we were to know the Atman or the Brahman, we could reach the absolute state of mind and determination of fate, i.e., resignation, that is liberation, and it cannot be reached by means of rituals, thus they asserted. Accordingly, all the thinkers in the Upanisads regarded knowledge highly, and found an uncommon mystical power in it.

(Ibid P 161)

Lord Buddha preached that Supreme Truth could be realised through a process of mental purification and detachment. It naturally began with the cultivation of virtue and the avoidance of sin. The mind thus became bright, strong and pliable and next engaged in contemplative detachment from its all habitual finite supports till it was transformed into infinite radiance or Non-dual Awareness or Being.

When we investigate further we find that in Shankara's 'Abheda' or 'Advaita' the 'cancellation of otherness' as subjectivity is Brahman as *SAT* (Truth) transcendental objectivity, cancellation of the confirmation of otherness as objectivity in Brahman as *CHIT* (constant awareness)—transcendental subjectivity- is the ontologization of a feeling of fullness, and that, is Brahman as *Anand* (perennial source of pleasure).

The Vedanta of Shankar can be described as *SETU* (bridge) which connects ideality with actuality through the deepening of an evaluating consciousness, known as

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(Source; Origin of Mahayan by Prof. G C Pandey in Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth P 169).

(Source: The meaning and vision of immediacy in Bradley's philosophy by S S Roy P 194 in Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth).

axiological attitude. Here there is no question of that fusing into what. ‘Somehow’. Reflective consciousness as philosophy, in the *Advaita*, is the self-complete system of a logic of idealities Axlescoping into a transcendental ontology via an axiological bridge. In Shankar the logic of meaning fused into the logic of existence.

It is a well-known principle accepted by many systems of Indian philosophy, including the *Sankhya-Yoga*, *Vedanta* etc. that the body apparatuses of individual beings are exact replica of the universe, and, as such, they represent the universe in miniature form. That being so, the *Sankhya* system holds that the individual being has constituent elements of all the *Tattvas* beginning with *Buddhi* (intellect) down to *PRITHVI* (earth).

*Tattvas* simultaneously exist in two forms... cosmic form in which they constitute the creation and are the material cause of universe, and the individual form in which they are constituent elements of body-apparatus.

The *Chhandogyopanisad* and the *Skandopanisad* conceive body as temple of Brahman. The idea of body as the abode of Brahman is explained in the verse- ‘*Deho Devalayam proktah, Jeevo Devah Sanatanah*.

Thus this injunction stands for assimilation of the external with the internal, the synthesis of macrocosm and microcosm or in other words the identification of individual soul with universal soul.

This Indian concept of differentiating body and soul has led to actions which reform the life of a faithful who remains in search of peace and bliss amid strife and mundane cares and anxieties of life. The Kumbh Parv in this context is an occasion of soulful celebration to improve the quality of life.

When a pilgrim prepares for the pilgrimage he tells his family, his neighbours, his relatives about it. Such pilgrims from crores of homes across the country undertake the journey with pious thoughts which from every nook and corner form into a wave flowing in the direction of Kumbh place turning into an invisible river of good thoughts. Participation in such an event is indeed an experience in itself.

It is said that religion is a long-term politics while politics is a short-time religion. Religions aim at doing good and appreciating goodness. Politics aims at fighting the evils and condemning it. But when religion ignores good things and engages itself

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(Source: The concept of Tattva-A Study, by Dr. Deba Brata Sen Sharma P. 199 in Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth)  
Source : The philosophy of Vastu Brahma by D.N. Shukla P. 478 in Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth.

only in rituals and politics stops fighting the evil and only engages itself in condemnation the real spirit of the two is lost breeding dissension and strife.

Kumbh Parv links man with man with a common objective of seeking immortality. It is not just a crowd. It is a congregation of faithfuls who seek reinforcement of their belief in good things of life which is an anti-death concept akin to immortality. It is the inner strength of a man that matters. One, who has lost it, is dead and the one, who preserves and further strengthens it, wards off death.

*The rapid current of life-river bears the world. The senses are crocodiles. The mind and its functional activity are the shores. Temptation and delusion are the grass. Lust and riches are the reptiles. The truth is the teertha, falsehood the surges and anger the mire. One can cross the river of life with the help of intellect. The uncleaned souls cannot cross it.*

This metaphorical description of life given in the *Shantiparv* of *Mahabharat* explains that *when the mind sleeps the impressions of the senses lead, when it becomes active it leads to selfish desires. When intellect helps to acquire the spiritually-balanced state it leads to cosmic love.*

It is relevant here to reproduce what *Shrimadbhagawat Gita* says; *tranquil is that man in whose heart the desires enter and not the man who hankers after external objects with greed.*

Viewed in this background the collective effort of the pilgrims attending the Kumbh Parv in Prayag is representative of deep faith and devotion which illuminates the soul and leads to sanctity of action and purity of thought. They free themselves for some period from vibrations of lust, passion and attachments which overshadow the human mind. This experience though brief in nature is akin to obtaining salvation which gives both content and meaning to life.

It is also to be noted that amid inaction there is stress on action. For instance *Shrimadbhagawat Gita does not recommend total discord of desires. Instead, it stresses on purification of desires by creating in heart a centre of cosmic love and universal good. Abandoning of desires means ceasing to work which is never acceptable to Shrimadbhagawat Gita.*

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(Source: *Mahabharata Shanti Parv* pages 248 and 250).

(Source: *Shrimadbhagawat Gita* Chapter II Verse 70).

(Source: *Vivekachudamani* edited by Swami Madhavanand, Almora, 1952 PP 42-43) *Vivekachudamani* edited by Munilal, Gorakhpur P 41

It has been fully explained that the mind is superior to the senses and intellect is superior to mind. Hence the recommendation to engage the mind into good things of life to arouse or sharpen the intellect to develop a centre of cosmic love, universal good, peace and bliss. The Kumbh effort should be appreciated in this context.

The world has been conceptualised as covered with *Trigunas* (three qualities). The three *gunas* are *Rajas*, *Tamas* and *Sattva*. What is *Rajas*? Its attributes are lust, anger, avarice, arrogance, ego, envy and jealousy.

What is *Tamas*? Its attributes are ignorance, laziness, dullness, carelessness and stupidity.

What is *Sattva*? Its attributes are cheerfulness, self-realisation, supreme peace, contentment and single-minded devotion to Parmatman,

These three *gunas*, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are connected with intellect, mind and senses. *Sattva* is related with spiritual order, the intellect makes man moral and spiritually conscious with the help of devotion and faith. *Rajas* leads to an unbalanced state of mind through its egoist thinking and perception and *Tamas* denotes sensually-engrossed mind taking it to the channel of infatuation.

The Kumbh endeavour is directed at acquisition of the *Sattva guna* for a balanced state of mind

What is life? Answering to this question a great philosopher and thinker of yore, Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Shrimadbhagawatgita says that *life is a Kurukshetra, the field of action. Kuru is representative of the English word 'do' and Kshetra denotes field. This Kurukshetra is also the Dharmakshetra, field of righteous action.*

Abhinavagupta gives an allegorical description of Kurukshetra and Dharmakshetra saying that *Duryodhana, as the name indicates, symbolises the lower desire hard to control. Dhritarashtra, the empirical ego, is completely dominated by his lower desires. Krishna as the charioteer, is the manifested Atman, the inner ruler, Sanjaya, the charioteer, and adviser of Dhritarashtra, is the link between the higher and lower minds. Thus the symbolism is complete.*

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(Source: As quoted by J.D. Singh, Varanasi, in his learned article, 'The first verse of Bhagawat Gita', appearing in 'Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Grantha' PP 213 and 214.

(Source: Indian Philosophy, Vol 1 P.521).

In this context it would also be relevant to quote Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the great Indian philosopher of recent times, who in his commentary on Shrimadbhagawatgita says.

*As the dialogue proceeds the dramatic element disappears. The echoes of the battlefield die away and we have only an interview between God and man. The chariot of war becomes the lonely cell of meditation and a corner of the battlefield, where the voices of the world are stilled, a fit place for the thoughts on the Supreme.*

The Kumbh Parv has the same connotation. Lakhs and lakhs of pilgrims in their quest for nectar of life do not constitute a crowd of multitudes, but a great congregation seeking an interview with God to steer clear of the cobweb of life.

## KUMBH AND THE FOUR PURUSHARTHAS

**T**he Hindu way of life has set four goals known as four PURUSHARTHAS- *Dharma* (duty), *Arth* (money), *Kaam* (fulfillment of desires) and *Moksha* (Salvation).

Explaining the concept of *Moksha* (salvation) Acharya Pt. Chandradeo Sharma principal of Government Sanskrit Vidyalaya, Betia in Champaran district of Bihar says- '*Complete abdication of glitters of the worldly wealth and detachment from it is known as Mukti or Moksha (salvation). By doing so a man finds the real support of his inner self... then he and his atman (self) are indivisible as water and its waves and rooted in his self he finds uninterrupted peace and bliss.*

Kumbh is considered the most auspicious occasion every twelfth year for exploration of the unified field of consciousness for realisation of self. It is not the field of science, but of Vedic science, the revealed knowledge about the Knower (God) and the process of knowing.

*"Though in its objective approach, modern science reveals that which is perceived, the object. The subject, the perceiver, remains separate from it. Modern science investigates into the field of the known, but it does not touch at all the field of the knower and the spontaneous process of knowing. (Maharshi Mahesh Yogi 1986 PP-27-28)*

The ancient Indian knowledge stressed learning of pure consciousness (Brahman), who is the Knower, having revealed knowledge and technique to reach Him in the Vedas on which are based *Upanishads*, *Puranas*, *Shrutis*, *Smritis*, Philosophy and other Hindu Holy scriptures. It explores the realm of the perceiver and how to balance the state of mind to reach the state of pure consciousness which is again a state beyond happiness and worldly pleasures.

Maharshi Mahesh Yogi says that the term '*pure consciousness.*' denotes the silent, unseen, non-changing unified field of consciousness at the basis of all the diverse, active phases of consciousness that we ordinarily experience. It is a self-referral state of consciousness. It can be known to itself by itself in its self-referral awareness. As soon as consciousness gains objective awareness, it is no longer pure

*consciousness. Pure consciousness is a state of Samadhi, perfect merging of self with God or direct communion with God.*

It is in search of the Knower (God) and the process of knowing that millions of Indians gather at Kumbh points in Prayag Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik. Many nations are known by their ideologies. Some are wedded to the stream of thought subscribing to dictatorship, some others to communism and many others to democracy. India is committed to democracy, socialism and secularism in conformity with its pluralistic society and is a Secular Democratic Republic.

There is a unique feature of Indian life as reflected in its philosophy of spiritualism amid materialism. It believes in simple living and high thinking following the philosophy of the same soul pulsating in every being on this earth.

Kumbh symbolises the essence of all that is lofty in the Hindu religion, culture, thought, tradition and civilisation.

It is religion of religions, culture of cultures, tradition of traditions and civilisation of civilisations in quest of peace of heart and mind to prepare oneself for the day of fulfillment. It is an education in spiritualism, in community living, thinking and a collective celebration, an endeavour to make life happy and the world a better place to live in peace and tranquility.

India in its thought process defies immediate comprehension. Due to its long-held tradition of diversity having a fine but strong bond of unity, India is considered by many, especially foreigners, as a nation of many nations, of thousand tongues and two million Gods and Goddesses. To go deep into the mystery of diversity that India offers one would have to study deep and understand a verse in Shrimad Bhagwat Geeta in which Lord Krishna says, '*As various rivers meet the ocean the worship of various Gods and Goddesses reaches me.*' In the Indian context the sects and religions, languages and dialects, the way of living, dresses and regions, may be strikingly different, but a slender link runs through them.

Many are of the view that India is a spiritual nation and materialist as well. While many believe in the concept of Brahman, God, salvation, Bhakti (devotion) and religion, many others consider it as unnecessary adjuncts to life and define the nation on materialistic values.

India has given philosophical recognition to individual freedom and on this basis

opted for democracy and republic state. The Constitution of India was framed and adopted on these lines. The countries, which opted for a closed society, also are today forced to reconsider and reorganise their society.

The symbol of the churning of the sea and obtaining a pitcher full of nectar in the process is a plea to the people for exploration of the self to store power for public welfare. To me this symbol preaches unity of all-good and evil forces-as in the case of sea churning unity of purpose among two constantly rival and warring groups of Gods and demons was achieved. This symbol preaches unity of mind and purpose as the first requisite to achieve anything spectacular.

Even an atheist cannot ignore such an august assembly of an awakened collective consciousness among the devotees who gather in lakhs at the Sangam for a holy dip during the auspicious periods, travelling to this place from far and wide and suffering innumerable inconveniences on the way without any complaint or remorse but with a cheer difficult to explain.

Those opposed to it may not risk delinking themselves from their family and environment. In such situations a voice of protest instantly becomes a language of self-analysis which again is the basis of Indian culture and civilisation.

The Kumbh tradition, in fact, is a tradition of self-analysis and self-realisation. It is a human activity for mental peace and it should be analysed from a human angle. We may reform a society not by ruining its faith, but by protecting the same to have them in confidence and to prepare them for accepting the reforms.

I am a humanist dedicated to work for emergence of the new man. The tragedy is that the spiritualists and materialists often tend to behave as anti-human beings and in such situations I start writing for a fine blend of spiritualism and materialism for a life of fulfillment, peace and tranquility.

Those who believe in other religions should be happy to note that Hinduism respects all faiths, and liberalism, tolerance and love for beauty are integral parts of its cultural and religious feelings.

In India *Dharma* has always been defined as *Manav Dharma* (duty of man) which is not confined to rituals alone. Secularism as such does not inspire its people but when religions today get derailed secularism has found acceptance as the greatest religion of people in this country.

*Teerthayatra* (pilgrimage) is done with some high aim and objective. That which hinders mental peace and makes life miserable is sin. That which is undesirable and against people's welfare is sin. To get rid of evil thoughts through pilgrimage, meditation, fast, *hath yoga*, self-realisation is the nectar of life.

The place where two streams meet is known as Prayag. Prayag (Allahabad) is the *Prayagraj* and *Teertharaj*, the king of *Teerthas*. Here not only three rivers meet, but the confluence of people and languages takes place as well. They bathe and pray for a peaceful long life. None would mind mixing with the crowd and welcome taking a dip together and by doing so they would be joining ranks with their ancestors of several generations having done just the same.

To an atheist a dip at the Sangam has no meaning, but for a faithful it is enriching, it fills his heart with celestial pleasure, he enjoys his wish fulfillment of a long treasured dream of a dip during the Kumbh in Prayag. This makes him extremely happy. On returning home and even on the way he shares his happiness with others. He returns home enriched within, enlightened and content. This is the greatest reward for him.

## AKHARAS OF SANYASINS

**T**here are a total of seven “Dashnami Akharas” of sanyasins who enter the Ardh Kumbh and Kumbh Mela area in colourful processions on different auspicious dates to give *darshan* to their devotees, pilgrims and camp in the mela.

These Akharas were created by Adi Guru Shankaracharya 509-476 B.C.) for protecting Hindus from forcible conversion and propagating the Vedic religion. These were created by him after he established four *mathas* (Puri, Sringeri, Dwarka and Badrinath) in four corners of the country with four of his disciples as *acharyas*, one for each of them.

The seven Dashnami Akharas are Nirvani and Atal, known together as Nirvani Akhara, Niranjani and Anand known together as Niranjani Akhara, and Joona, Awahan and Agni, known as Joona Akhara.

The Adi Guru Jagatguru Shankaracharya directed his disciples, in the four *mathas* to work hard to rejuvenate the *Vedic Dharma* and created *Dashnam sanyasin* system for reorganising the *sanyas* system of the Hindu life.

In those days the average life-span of a person was considered 100 years with four equal parts to it. The first 25 years were devoted to *Brahmacharya* and study, the second quarter to family life, the third quarter to gradual withdrawal from cares and worries of life and the last quarter to total renunciation.

The *Acharyas* in the four mathas with their respective titles as Swarup, Prakash, Anand and Chaitanya are known as Shankaracharya who have made a deep study of the *Vedas*, the *Puranas*, the *Upanishadas*, the *shastras* and the *smritis*, fully conversant with and trained in performing and conducting *pooja*, *yagyas* and *karmakanda*.

The first among the seven Dashnami Akharas to enter the mela area is Niranjani in a colourful procession. This is followed by the entry of Nirvani and Joona Akharas. A large number of people, particularly the *kalpavasis*, throng the procession routes on such occasions to have *darshan* of the sanyasins.

In this Dashnam system there are a large number of Nagas with matted hair ash-smeared body, naked, unmindful of the public gaze and some others wearing only *kaupeen* (Lion cloth).

The Dashnami sanyasins worship Lord Shiv. At the end of religious discourses by the Shankaracharyas, the disciples around them raise slogans in full-throated ease, such

as "*Dharm Ki Jai Ho*", "*Adharm Ka Nash Ho*", *Praniyon men sadbhawana ho, desh ka vikas ho, Vishwa Ka Kalyan ho, Har, Har Mahadeo*", meaning thereby let the *dharma* (religion) win, let *adharma* (acts against religion) perish, let the people have fellow feeling, let the nation develop (progress) and let the world have bliss of happiness, O Lord Shiv.

The Allahabad Gazeteer of 1909 says that the Nirvanis, who are Naga gosains, have a large establishment at Daraganj. Niranjanis with a similar fraternity, called Joonas, too, belong chiefly to Daraganj in Allahabad.

*The Vairagis, it says, are all Vaishnavites and wandering medicants without any fixed residence. They have three divisions, the Nirvanis, Nirmonhis and Digambaris, who are generally at variance with each other and are always apt to cause trouble at these assemblages.*

Then comes the Chhota Panchayati Akhara, a body of Udasins of Punjab, who have a large monastery in Muthiganj (Allahabad). Originally Sikh, they are now to all intents Hindus, though they retain the Granth as their chief religious book.

An offshoot of this body is the Bara Panchayati Akhara in Kydganj (Allahabad) where they have a large establishment. They are very wealthy and make much money by banking.

*The Ramanujis of Daraganj (Allahabad) are one of the richest and largest communities in Allahabad and the Ramanandis of the Dharmashala of Baba Hari Das in Kydganj (Allahabad) are another important body of the Vaishnavites. Both are Tyagis, that is to say married men who have deserted their families, and they depend mainly on alms given by people of the city, says the gazeteer.*

*On the special bathing occasions during the period of Kumbh Mela, ascetics of different Akharas (order of sects) march to the river in a formal procession, viewed en route by millions of devout pilgrims who have their darshan and pay their homage. Each sect has its own camp and only those with prescriptive rights are allowed to participate in the procession. Lay people have their turn for the holy bath only after the sadhus have had a dip.*

*According to the Allahabad district Gazeteer (1968), the Nirvanis, who are naga gosains and are followers of Shiv lead the (bathing) procession. They remain naked, have matted hair and each carries a bell. None of them ask for alms. The Niranjanis,*

*who take the next place in the procession, are also Saivites and remain naked. The Bairagis who come next are wandering sadhus. Then comes the Chhota Panchayati Akhara, a body of Udasins. An offshoot of this body is the opulent Bara Panchayati Akhara, with which are associated with the Nanakshahis, the Nirmalis: members of these as well as the Bindbasis join the procession.*

*Various Akharas march in great pomp with a number of elephants, musicians and palanquins for their Mahantas. In addition to the Akharas, a large number of Sadhus frequent these fairs and have camps of their own. Two important Vaishnava Sects, the Ramanujis and the Ramanandis, also join the procession.*

## MAHANIRVANI AKHARA

The history of Naga Sanyasins predates history. A brief book containing a total of 39 pages brought out in 1966 on the occasion of Kumbh that year by Panchayati Akhara Mahanirvani details the origin of Dashanami Naga Sanyasins and origin, growth and contributions of Mahanirvani Akhara. It says:

*The tradition of Naga Sanyasins is very old. In the excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa a statue of Pashupati seated naked was found. In Vedic literature as well a half naked Bhagwan Shiv sporting matted hair, body smeared with ash, finds reference. This explains the origin of Nagas in pre-history period.*

Mahanirvani Akhara was set up in Samvat 805, corresponding to 749 AD. Its headquarters is in Daraganj locality of the city on Nirala Marg, in Allahabad. Its main branches are in Onkareshwar (MP), Hardwar, Kankhal in UP, Kurukshetra in Haryana, Nasik in Maharashtra, Udaipur in Rajasthan, Jwalamukhi, Kashi (Varanasi) etc.

Since its inception the Akharas of Sanyasins have an inbuilt democratic system of management through eight elected senior Sanyasins known as *Shrimahant* for a period of three years. For their assistance eight other seniors are elected, known as *karbaris* (executives). The daily affairs of an Akhara are run by an executive. The *Shrimahantas* who are the chiefs supervise the working from time to time. The responsibility of convening meetings of Akharas rests on the most senior Sanyasin who is known as '*Dhooniwale Baba*' whose status may be compared to that of the Speaker in the Assembly. Strict discipline is enforced and decisions are taken after great deliberations and arriving at a consensus. In the matters of enforcing discipline none, however senior one may be, is spared.

Equality and fraternity are the foundationstone of this democratic set up. Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are treated equally and the property of the Akhara is a collective property of the institution and none of the sanyasins has personal right to it.

The book says that Mahatma Gandhi during pre-independence days on his visit to Prayag met some of the Sanyasins of Mahanirvani Akhara. He evinced keen interest in its democratic set up and is stated to have expressed that Independent India would adopt this system of Panchayati Raj.

## PRAYAG: WHY TEERTHRAJ?

What makes lakhs of pilgrims flock to Prayag in the month of *Magh*? What are the rewards promised for such a pilgrimage? Why is Prayag called the *Teerthraj*? These questions find answers in various Hindu scriptures, specially in the *Sriprayagmahatmya Shatadhyayi*, the *Matsya Puran*, the *Padma Puran*, the *Mahabharat*, *Balmikiy Ramayan*, *Sri Ram Charit Manas* etc.

Holy places have the power of freeing a man from sins committed at other places, the Kumbhakon has power to absolve a man of sins committed at holy places, Varanasi has power to free a man from sins committed at Kumbhakon and Prayag is empowered to absolve a man of sins committed in Varanasi. The sins committed at Prayag are burnt in the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati has power to burn sins committed in the Yamuna while the Ganga has powers to free a man from sins committed in the Saraswati. The Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, has power to burn sins committed in Ganga.

This is on the authority of *slokas* (verses) 8,9, 10 and 11 in chapter III of *Sriprayagmahatmya Shatadhyayi* which in 100 chapters deals with the importance of Prayag as the *Teerthraj*, the king of *teerthas* in the world. It says that the man having committed sins even at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna is freed from it when he dies in Prayag.

Why *Teerthraj*? There are three crore and 10,000 *Teerthas* in the three *Lokas* (Earth, Heaven and Ether) which converge in Prayag in the month of *Magh* for a dip at the Sangam to please Lord Veni Madhav, the chief deity of Prayag, who is the King of all *Teerthas* in the said three worlds.

When the sun enters the *Maker Rashi* in the month of *Magh* the august assembly of *teerthas* in the three worlds is held in Prayag and it is for gaining the blessings of all these *Teerthas* that the pilgrims from various parts of the country, saints and seers, *rishis* and *mahatmas* flock to the Sangam for a holy dip to get absolved of sins and attain salvation.

Once Brahma used a scale to weigh the *Saptapuris*-Ayodhya, Mathura, Hardwar, Kashi, Kanchi, Ujjain and Puri-which weighed evenly against each other. Then on one side of the scale the *Saptapuris* were kept and on the other the seven *Kul Parvatas* (mountains), the *Saptsamudras* (seven seas), *Saptadweepas*, *Navkhandas*, all *Teerthas* and rivers and rivulets yet the scale did not become even and the side of *Saptapuris*

on the scale was heavy, Brahma and other gods baffled at this miracle weighed again and again but the result was the same. Then they went to Sheshraj to get their doubts resolved.

The Shesharaja, as described in the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Sriprayagmahatmya*, directed Brahma to put on one side of the scale the *saptapuris*, the mountains, the seas, the *Dweepas*, the *Navkhandas*, all the *teerthas* and rivers and the rivulets and on other Prayag, which is the head of the *Virat Purusha*, the Almighty. This done, the two sides of the scale weighed evenly.

The Sheshraja said that the *Saptapuris* having powers of granting salvation would outweigh all others while all others including the Saptapuris, would be outweighed by Prayag alone as it is the seat of the *Virat Purush*, the Almighty, and fountainhead of all *Teerthas* and holy places in the three worlds. This is the seat of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi and grants the four *Purusharthas*, *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksh*, while other Teerthas either grant moksh or grant wish fulfillment and so on.

This was why Brahma performed 10 *Dashashwamedh Yagyas* on the western bank of the Ganga after which there is the *Dashashvamedhaghaghat* in Prayag. Lord Shankar performed *Tandava* dance near the *Akhaiyavat*, permanent abode of Lord Vishnu, and Lord Vishnu was pleased to direct Shankar to live in *Anandvan* at the confluence of *Varuna* and *Assi* rivers after which the city of Varanasi is named.

Indra worshipped Lord Vishnu here, so did Varun and Som. It was because of great *Yagyas* performed here that the city was named as Prayag. The prefix “*pra*” means “*Prakrishta*” (great) and *Yag* means *Yagy*. This is the significance of the name Prayag.

The *Akhaiyavat*, which is presently situated in the precincts of the Allahabad Fort on its southern side overlooking the Sangam, does not perish even in *Mahapralaya* (great Deluge). Lord Vishnu, the *Virat Purush*, starts recreating the world from this very point being his permanent abode.

Prayag’s history is shrouded in antiquity so much so that on the authority of *Puranas* we know that *Prayag kshetra* remains safe even when the entire world suffers annihilation.

The Hindu holy scriptures, specially *Padmapuran*, extolling the religious and spiritual importance of Prayag in 100 chapters says: Vishnu, known as Veni-Madhav, the presiding deity of Prayag, sleeps as a child on the leaves of Akhaiyavat, the undying

banyan tree, encompassing in His stomach the entire *Brahmanda* sucking the two big toes of His feet and recreates the world after its annihilation.

Lord Vishnu as Veni Madhav, is known in Prayag as Akshai Madhav, Vat Madhav, Mool Madhav, Shankh Madhav, Chakra Madhav, Gada Madhav, Padma Madhav, Anant Madhav, Vindu Madhav, Manohar Madhav and Asi Madhav.

At the Sangam He is known as Veni Madhav, the chief Deity of Prayag, and in the form of Sankashtahar Madhav, He takes a constant round of all the directions in the *Prayagakshetra* to protect his devotees from evils and help them attain *Dharm, Arth, Kam* and *Moksh*.

Of the four Vedas, the *Rigved*, has been acclaimed by scholars across the world as the oldest written book in existence since 5000 years before Christ.

The earliest reference to the importance of a dip at the Sangam may be traced in the *Rigved*. A “Richa” in the Dasham (Tenth) Mandal of the Rigved says that those who bathed at the Sangam attained salvation after death.

Prayag is a legendary city, *Padma Puran* says that the name of this place was given by Vishnu and Shiv themselves as they found it as a place where *yagnas* of the highest order were performed and enriched with various kinds of alms to the scholars, the poor, Brahmins and the needy.

Prayag is said to be the birth place of Brahma, Som and Varun. Its reference may be traced in the ‘*Aadi Parva*’ of the *Mahabharat*, Dhaumya and Pulatsya Rishis are described in the Van Parva of the Mahabharat to have undertaken a pilgrimage to Prayag. Prayag has been described as the abode of Rishis, Gods and Teerthas of the world. All the three crore and 10,000 teerthas of the world assemble at Prayag in the month of Magh to derive strength afresh here.

Goswami Tulsidas has in his *Ramcharit Manas* described that when the sun enters the Capricorn zone in the month of *Magh* all gods and demons assemble at Prayag to have a dip at the Sangam. The *Anushasan Parv* of the Mahabharata refers to the visits of the *teerthas* of the world to Prayag during the said auspicious month.

The *Rigved*, the *Puranas*, the *Smritis*, the *Mahabharat*, the *Shastras* and *Tantra Granthas* make innumerable mention of the importance of Prayag and a dip at the Sangam.

Prayag is believed to be one of the *Yagya Vedis* of Brahma, who is stated to have performed *Yagya* here. So has been done by all other Gods.

Allahabad, which was earlier known as Prayag, has been a place where various religions and cultures merged into one vibrant force of quest for the Knower and process of knowing.

The great sage Bhardwaj lived in Prayag some 5,000 years before the birth of Christ, teaching 10,000 disciples and spreading celestial knowledge. The Vedic age is considered the oldest. According to Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Vedic age was 8,000 to 6,000 years before the birth of Christ.

*Rigveda's Shakal Samhita*, refers to Sage Bharadwaj. Numerous Vedic *Mantras* are credited to him. He has been acclaimed as a great philosopher and exponent of the Vedas, a scientist, and a great teacher.

Prayag has been a meeting point of spiritual heads, intellectuals, saints, seers and sanyasins, who assembled at the Sangam, in the month of *Magh* every year, to exchange knowledge and discuss cosmic reactions and organise great religious ceremonies to counter evil.

Such is the greatness and importance of Prayag, which casts its magic spell on pilgrims in various parts of the country attracting them towards it like a magnet in the month of *Magh* when the world's greatest religious assembly takes place every year.

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Source: *Prayag Mahatmya* in *Padma Puran*, *Shri Prayagmahatmya Shatadhyayi* Verses 38 to 41, Verses 8 to 12 in *Poorvardh Chapter 3*, chapters 4, 33, 34. *Matsy Puran*, Chapters 103 to 111.  
*Mahabharat*, *Shanti Parv*, *Rigved*, Xth Mandal, *Shri Ramacharit Manas* by Saint Poet Tulsidas.

## THE TEERTHARAJ

**I**n Sri Ramacharit Manas, Tulsidas Provides a beautiful allegoric description of Prayag as the *Teertharaj*.

He has created this allegory as perceived by Lord Ram in exile having reached Prayag after His overnight stay at Sringverpur, some 30 km to the north-west of the city. Tulsi says:’

*The secretary of Prayagaraj is truth, consort (queen) is faith, Veni Madhav is the ever-helping Friend. The treasury is full of the four purusharthas Dharma (Duty), Artha (Wealth), Kaam (Noble desires) and Moksha (Salvation). The holy place (the kingdom) is very beautiful. It is an inaccessible fortress, which even in dream enemies could not capture. It has a large army of all the holy Teerthas powerful enough to humble any army of sins and evildoers.*

*The throne of Prayagraj is the confluence of the three rivers. The canopy over it is the Akshaiyavat. The waves of the Ganga and Yamuna attend on the Teertharaj as Chawar (a special kind of hanging large fan tied to a string for swinging in either direction to make air for cooling effect in the sweltering summer season.) By witnessing the Teertharaj thus men’s sufferings and poverty vanish.*

*Holy men, sadhus and pious people who obtain wish fulfillment serve Prayagaraj. Its glory has been described by the Vedas, Puranas etc.*

*Who can describe the glory and grandeur of Prayag? It is like a lion for sins as an elephant. The source of celestial bliss Lord Ram Himself was thrilled at the sight of such a Prayagaraj.*

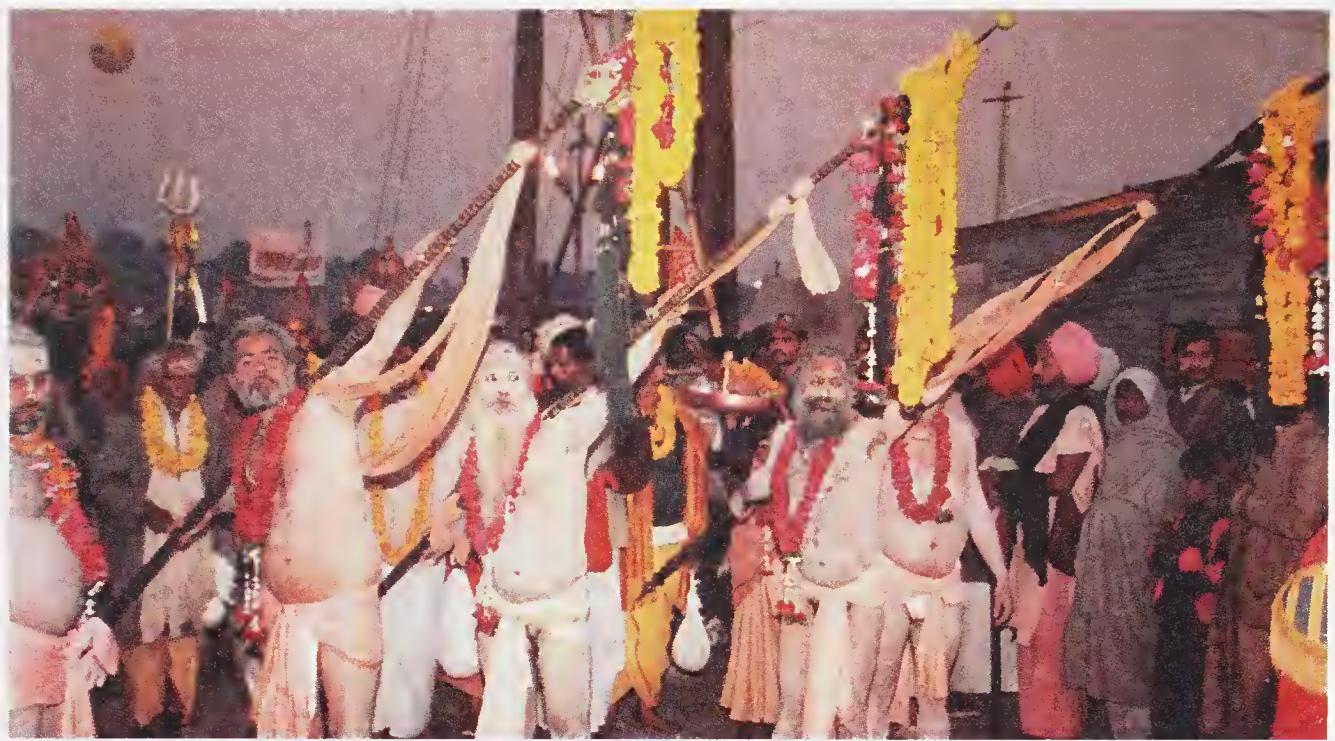
Lord Ram himself spoke thus of the glory of Prayag to his brother, wife and friend Nishadaraj. Thereafter, He witnessed Triveni which grants all good things of life even on its remembrance. He had a dip at the Sangam, worshipped Lord Shiv and other Teerth Devatas (Gods) and then proceeded to the Ashram of Sage Bhardwaj.



Holy Akshaiyavat situated near Triveni Sangam



Sadhus and devotees taking part in a procession at Kumbh



Sadhus as part of their sadhana performing religious ceremonies at Kumbh



Sadhus as part of their sadhana performing religious ceremonies at Kumbh

## TRIVENI, VAT KSHETRA AND VENI MADHAV

**W**hat is Triveni?

*Veni* is conceived to have three forms-*Veni*, *Aadi Veni* and *Antya Veni*. The three together make *Triveni*. A radius of 30 bows from the Sangam (confluence) is known as *Veni*, which is also known as the *Madhya Veni*, (the middle of the Sangam).

*Veni* near *Akshaiyavat* is called *Aadi Veni*, and *Antya Veni* is from the middle of the streams of the two rivers up to the Someshwar temple on Arail side across the Sangam.

What is *Vat (Akshaiyavat) Kshetra*?

The area (*kshetra*), which is visible from the middle of the Sangam which gives a view of the six river banks (two of the Ganga, two of the Yamuna and two of the Sangam itself) is called the *Vat kshetra*.

The Padmapuran extolling the importance of Prayag in *Prayag Mahatmya Shatadhyayi* (Chapters 73 to 75) gives descriptions of Shri Veni Madhav, the main deity of Prayag, having taken position in as many as 13 forms in various directions to protect pilgrims from evil forces. These details may be traced from 73<sup>rd</sup> Chapter to 75<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the *Shatadhyayi*.

First of the 13 forms of Veni Madhav as the Mool Madhav is conceived here to the right side of the Akshaiyavat which is also venerated as the *Vaishnav Peeth*. The Akshaiyavat is venerated as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv.

The Second form is of Akshaiy Madhav to the north of Akshaiyavat and underneath the third form Vat Madhav. Legend goes that even in the great deluge this Akshaiyavat and Vaishnav *peeth* survive. Shakta, Shaiva, Saur (related to the Sun) and Ganapatya (related to Lord Ganesh) *peethas* also are located here.

Shankh Madhav temple in Chhatanag, Veni Madhav temple in Daraganj, Sankashtahar Madhav temples of Veni Madhav are however found on the indicated locations. Further research is required to decide the original locations of other Madhav temples.

The Puranas say that Veni Madhav does not expect anything from pilgrims. He is pleased at their stay in Prayag during the auspicious month of *Magh*. He is Himself an inexhaustible treasure of the four Purusharthas which on being pleased He grants to the devotees and pilgrims.

Prayag is also protected by Devaraj (king of Gods) Indra. Lord Vishnu himself as Veni Madhav together with all Gods protects *Prayag Kshetra*. In child form He sleeps on the leaves of Akshaiyavat protected by Lord Shiv. Such is the glory of the *Prayag Kshetra* as extolled by the Hindu holy scriptures. (chapter 72, Verses 23/35, *Prayag Mahatmya Shatadhyayi*).

Chakra Madhav is located in the direction of *Agnikona* of Akshaiyavat and in its southern direction is Gada Madhav. In the direction of *Nairityakona* is Padma Madhav, to the west Anant Madhav, in *Vayavyakona* is Vindu Madhav, in North Manohar Madhav, in *Ishankona* is Asi Madhav.

Sankashtahar Madhav is in Jhusi on eastern bank of the Ganga underneath the *Sandhya Vat*.

Veni Madhav is exactly at the confluence in his *Chaturbhuj* form holding *shankh* (conchshell), *Chakra* (Wheel), *Gada* and *Kamal* (Lotus).

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Source: *Prayaga Mahatmya Shatadhyayi Matsya Puran*.  
East-South Corner (*Agnikona*)  
South-South  
South-West Corner (*Nairityakona*)  
West-North Corner (*Vayavyakona*)  
North-East Corner (*Aishanya Kona*)

## PRAYAG THROUGH PURANAS

**T**he Mankameshwar temple to the west of Allahabad Fort on the northern bank of the Yamuna, Nagvasuki temple to the extreme north of the Daraganj locality on the western bank of the Ganga, Bhardwaj Ashram near the Anand Bhawan in Colonelganj locality and the Kotitheertheshwar (Sheokuti) temple on the southern bank of the Ganga to the north of the city are situated on the locations as indicated in the *patal khand* of *Shri Padmapuran*.

Various other Puranas describe a number of places of pilgrimage in Prayag. It would be enlightening to reproduce here a few of the earliest references to the places of pilgrimage and tourist importance in the city and on its outskirts.

In Chapter 138 of *Varah Puran* one finds references to the Someshwara, Trikanteshwara and Shoolkantaka Shiv Lingam and Veni Madhav in Prayag.

In Chapter 108 of *Matsya Puran* there is a description of Bhogawatipuri situated between *Kambal* and *Ashwatar* banks of the Yamuna river. Chapter 37 of the *Koorma Puran* gives the location of these two banks to the south of the Yamuna river.

Chapter 105 of the *Matsya Puran* says that the *Rinmochan Teertha* is to the south of Prayag on the Southern bank of the Yamuna. In this very chapter the locations of Hansprapatan Teertha, Vipul Teertha and Hanspandoor Teerthas are given. The name of the Hansteerth has been referred to in chapter 138, too. In *Matsya Puran* the location of the Samudrakoop has been given to the east of the Ganga in Chapters 30 and 31.

A reference to the *Akshaiyavat*, the undying banyan tree, has been made in Chapters 23 and 25 of the *Padma Puran* in which it has also been said that Lord Vishnu sleeps on the leaves of the *Akshaiyavat*. Chapter 104 of the *Matsya Puran* refers to Akshaiyavata's importance and chapter III of the *Agni Puran* refers to Akshaiyavat, Vasuki and Hansteerth.

Innumerable references have been made in the Puranas to the importance of Prayag as the *Teertharaj*, a few of which may be quoted here. Chapters 6 and 7 of the *Matsya Puran* say that 60,000 Teerthas assemble at Prayag in the month of *Magh*. A pilgrim on pilgrimage to Prayag in this sacred month gets beneficial influences of visiting all those Teerthas.

Chapter 102 of the *Matsya Puran* says that Lord Shiv has His permanent abode at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna.

Nagvasuki figures among seven important *Teertha Devas* (Gods) in Prayag.

A Sanskrit sloka says:

*Trivenim, Madhavam, Somam,*  
*Bhardwajam ch Vasukim,*  
*Vande Akshaiyavatam, Shesham*  
*Prayagam Teerthanayakam.*

(Triveni, Veni Madhav, Som, Bhardwaj, Vasuki, Akshaiyavat and Sheshanag are the seven important Teerth Gods in Prayag).

The location of Vasuki temple is described in the *Puranas* being to the north of Bhardwaj Ashram. To the east of this temple is Pratisthanpuri (Jhusi) and Samdudrakoop (Jhusi), to its west is Kambalashwatar Nag and to the south Bahumoolak Nag Kshetra.

Lord Sheshnag has in the *Patal Khand* of *Varah Puran* describing this location said that at this very place Divodas had performed *Tapasya* for 60,000 years to please him (Sheshnag). This place is spread over on 150 yards where innumerable serpents live.

*Bhogawati Kund* is mentioned to be in existence near the Nagvasuki temple. Lord Sheshnag has himself said that it is to the east of Vasuki *Kshetra* and to the west of the Dharmaraj lies the *Bhogawati Teerth*, a dip in which wards off fear from serpents.

The Nagvasuki temple is situated at a two-km distance to the north of the Sangam and to extreme north of Daragani locality. The place is secluded and atmosphere conducive to calm meditation.

The Mankameshwar temple is situated on the northern bank of Yamuna near the Saraswati Ghat. On the Arail side are situated Someshwar, Shooltankeshwar, Trikanteshwar and Adi Venimadhav temples, the references of which could be found in Puranas. It is believed that a worship of Lord Kameshwar with pure heart and dedication grants fulfillment of desires. This temple overlooking the Yamuna and Sangam is also visited by pilgrims the year round.

## PRAYAGAWALS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The history of *Prayagawals* (*Teerthapurohitas*) is as old as the *Prayag Teerth* itself. *Teerth* and *Teerthapurohita* (priests) complement each other. It is the *Teerthapurohita*, known as *Panda* and *Ghatia* in common parlance, who tell their *yajmanas* (pilgrims) about the glory and importance of the *Teerth* as described in the *Vedas*, *Puranas*, *Mahabharat*, *Ramayan*, *Shri Ramacharit Manas*, and other holy Hindu scriptures and conducts the holy act of the pilgrims.

There are in *Prayag* about 800 families of *Teerthapurohitas* who are organised in a body known as *Prayagawal Sabha*, which is their representative one. Each family has an emblem which is distinctive for its identity as *Teerthapurohit* for *Maharashtrians*, *Punjabis*, *Gujaratis*, *Andhras*, *Keralites*, *Kashmiris* etc.

The *Mahabharat* tells about the visit of *Pandavas* and the *Ramayan* about Lord *Ram* to *Prayag* where they also conducted *Yagyas* to satisfy the spirit of their forefathers through '*Pindadan*' (offering of food).

The recorded history of *Teerthapurohitas* is available since the recorded history of *Prayag* through two and a half millennium. As the religious rites and practices are in our blood, we are less curious and descriptive about it. But to a foreigner it is bewildering and beyond imagination.

*Megasthenes* came to *Prayag* in 302 BC on his way to *Pataliputra*, on a political mission. The famous Chinese pilgrims-*Fa Hien* and *Hiuen Tsang*-visited the holy city in 299 A.D. and 629 A.D., respectively, to study *Buddhism*.

The Muslim historian, *Rashidud-din*, came to *Prayag* in 1310, *Tieffenthaler*, a Dutch missionary in 1765 and the British historian *Cunningham* in 1865. Then came philosophers *Count Kesserling* and *Huxley*. After Independence, came another great ambassador of goodwill, *Miss Eleanor Roosevelt*. Sitting in a country boat, she made the traditional offering of milk at the *Triveni*.

*Mark Twain* wrote in his book '*More Tramps Abroad*' that the *pilgrims had come from all over the country. They had travelled for months plodding along patiently in the heat and dust, worn out and hungry, but supported and sustained by an unwavering faith and belief.*

*Hiuen Tsang* described the *Magh Mela* as an 85-day assembly of wandering *sadhus*, *sanyasins* and intellectuals from all over the country. *The proceedings*, the Chinese

traveller says, *were of a curious nature, worship being offered to Buddha, Shiv and the Sun impartially, while the Buddhist monks, the Brahmins and even the Jain ascetics received gifts alike.*

Hiuen Tsang says, *"To the east of the capital (Prayag) between the confluence of the two rivers, the ground is pleasant and upland. It is covered with fine sand. From ancient times to the present the king and other noble families came to this place and gave things away in charity. Hence it is called the great charity enclosure. At present Siladitya Raja, following the example of his ancestors distributes here, in one day, the accumulated wealth of five years. On the first day he adorns in a very sumptuous way, a statue of Buddha and then offers to it the most costly jewels."*

*"Afterwards he offers his charity to the residential priests and then to the priests who come from a distance and then to the men of distinguished talent, followed by the heretics and lastly to the widows and bereaved, orphans and desolate, poor and mendicants."*

The Allahabad Gazeteer of 1909 says, *"Every pilgrim has his hereditary priest at Allahabad, a Prayagwal family with distinguishing emblem painted on a flag fluttering over the place where the Panda sits."*

Mr. E.L. Brown, a British Journalist who covered 1870 Kumbh in his dispatches wrote exhaustively about the religious practices.

He writes, *"A shivering pious Hindu native solemnly holds in his right hand the money, the tail of a cow or the tusk of an elephant, while the 'Panda' recites the sankalp or absolution.*

*"The westernly breeze blowing this year has added to the agony of the 6,500 Hindu pilgrims who have assembled at the Kumbh mela, where they will take dips at the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna. The act, the Hindus believe, will give them salvation and will free them from re-birth, which the native Hindus believe is a reality.*

*"Each Hindu who shaves off his hair above the chin and throws it into the Ganges, gets relief from re-birth for thousands of years to come, as the Prayag Mahatmya, a religious scripture of the Hindus, promises release from 10,000 re-birth for every hair sacrificed in the sacred Hindu style at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamuna."*

*“Pilgrims attending the Magh Mela are conducted by the Prayagwals on a regular round of religious observance. Few of the directions in that book are now observed, and sometimes all are omitted, save shaving, bathing and paying fees.*

*“A pilgrim on his first visit should offer a coconut to Veni Madho-the deity of Triveni, but the practice is not common. As a general rule, after reaching his Prayagwal’s ghat and taking off his clothes, the pilgrim is sent to “Naua-bara” or the barber’s quarter and there shaved.”*

Referring to the privileges of some people in observing the rules and regulations for the ‘holy dips’, Brown says, *“Residents of Allahabad are not obliged to have their heads shaved. While a man whose father is alive will not part with his moustaches, widows and women from Southern provinces, whether they have husbands or not, shave all their hair off.*

*“The barber’s usual fee is one or two pice (paise) and the shaven hair, which at one time was sold by contracts and subsequently used to be buried in the sands, is now taken away by boats, tie in bundles and thrown into the deep part of the river. Shaving is necessary because hair is considered unclean.”*

Giving minute details on the observances of the religious Hindu pilgrims who visited Allahabad from far-flung areas, Brown wrote, *“The next act is that of bathing, and for the vast majority the ceremony is very simple and is accompanied by the gift of some pice (paise) to the Prayagwal (priest).*

*“Those who wish to make a special offering, hold in their right hand the money, the ear of the goat or horse, the tail of the cow or the tusk of the elephant while the ‘panda’ makes a special prayer with assurance to the pilgrim that his special prayer will be fulfilled.*

*The innocent pilgrims, who have come mostly from villages in various provinces, seem to believe the ‘pandas’ and go home with new hopes.*

*“After bathing an offering of milk and flower is often made to the river, and then many of the pilgrims resort to the Patalpuri temple in the fort, to worship before the sacred tree and make offerings. The pilgrims have to pay some entrance fees at the temple.”*

Commenting on the behaviour of the ‘pandas’ and the like, Brown wrote, *“On the day of bathing the bather is supposed to fast, but the Prayagwals seldom take the*

*trouble of informing their clients of their duties. They may leave when they have paid their fees, which consists of the utmost the Prayagwal can extort, and when the 'jajman' has satisfied his priest, the latter gives him blessings, striking him three times on the back and pronouncing him 'suphal'*

*"Frequently the pilgrims are left penniless, as is hardly surprising, and in such cases the 'pandas' will often lend him money to be repaid with interest on the next visit to the Triveni."*

## ALLAHABAD FORT, AKSHAIYAVAT AND SARASWATI KOOP

Allahabad Fort, standing majestically at the Sangam, is a symbol of Hindu -Muslim unity. The confluence of the three holy rivers, Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati, a bewitching natural phenomenon, has much to do with the composite culture of this great ancient city.

The fort was not originally what it looks today. The British occupation of this fort caused irreparable damage to its picturesque and architectural beauty in a calculated way ending in 1938 to convert it into a modern stronghold.

Originally, it was an irregular triangle in outline, surrounded by a lofty embattled wall of red sandstone and the latter was pierced by three magnificent gateways, one opening on the Ganga to the east, the other on the Yamuna to the south and the third opening on the landside protected by a deep and a low outer work similar to that of Agra. It presented then an appearance which may well have equalled to the forts in Agra and Delhi. But, unfortunately only a few traces of its ancient splendour remain today.

The towers were pruned down and the high stone ramparts on the landside were topped with turfed parapets and obscured by a green sloping glacis by the British.

The Yamuna side gate was closed and the upper storeys of the main gateway were pulled down by the British, leaving the bare concrete shell of the main dome, the interior of which still bears traces of its former beauty in the shape of carved stone work and faded frescoes.

There is a controversy as to when this fort was built as two contradictory dates are advanced by two Muslim writers. Muslim recorder Badaoni states that in 1575 Akbar visited Prayag and there he laid the foundation of an imperial city which is called *Ilahabas*.

This tree, mentioned by Badaoni, must be the Akshaiyavat, which many Muslim and Persian writers have described as "*the Tree of Prayag*." This statement of Badaoni suggests that the tree was still in the open air. To the same year belongs the inscription of Birbal on the Ashoka pillar, which would have been in a prostrate position then.

It would be interesting here to recall what Nizám-u-Din Ahmad, the author of *Tabaqut-I-Akbari*, has said in his book. He says that in 1584 Akbar commanded a city and fort to be built at Prayag under the name of *Ilahabas*, and that he went by boat from Agra to the place, where he spent four months.

Before the fort was built the celebrated Patalpuri temple stood probably on high ground and in the days of Hiuen Tsang there was an outer courtyard in which stood Akshaiyavat from which devotees used to cast themselves down, the paved courtyard being full of bones of those who had thus sought salvation. It was from this tree that Faquires used to suspend themselves by hooks, but this practice was stopped by Akbar after the fort, taking Akshaiyavat inside, was constructed.

Little is known as to how this fort was built, as some say that its foundation had been laid by Emperor Ashok, while many others say it was built by Emperor Akbar. There is another interesting story, which merits attention, behind construction of this fort, by Akbar.

The fort, as it stands today, has encircled the Akshaiyavat, the undying banyan tree, the Patalpuri temple of Hindu gods and goddesses and the Saraswati Koop, believed to have its perennial source at the Sangam.

Emperor Akbar had stayed in Allahabad for some time on his way to Bengal. During the period a number of Rajas paid substantial amounts to Akbar as present. The Raja of Jhusi, known as Pratisthanpuri in the Vedic and Pauranic age, had no great income and saving and he, too, had been invited to see the Emperor.

On receiving the invitation the Raja was greatly agitated and due to his inability to match his presents to the Emperor with the presents being offered by other Rajas, he fell ill.

The Wazir (Prime Minister) of the Raja inquired after the health of the King who, having his great faith in the competence of his prime minister told him the real story about his illness. He said that he could not afford to pay audience to the emperor and, as such, he had taken ill and instead would send a letter to the Emperor.

Birbal grasped the situation and requested him not to worry as he would be able to manage the affair whereupon the Raja felt assured. This Wazir was the legendary Birbal. He went to see the emperor with another Raja. He found that Akbar was religious in temperament. Man Singh's sister whom the emperor had married was accompanying him and Birbal was quick and wise enough to form his opinion.

The next day, Birbal got a silver sledge and hammer and some Ganga sand on a silver plate and took the Ganga water, flowers and *Tulsidal* (leaves of venerable plant) in a silver glass as presents to the Emperor. The Raja of Jhusi with these presents went to pay respects to the Emperor with Birbal.

The Raja paid the tributes, but the contents were not opened in presence of the Badshah.

Later when the Raja came out it was opened in the presence of Birbal and placed before the Badshah who was a bit annoyed at it. Birbal was quick to guess it and submitted to the Emperor that this present was in token of concurrence of the Raja of Jhusi that the Emperor wanted to construct a memorial at this holy place. These were symbolic of implements and holy things for laying the foundation of the fort and performing *pooja* with. These were also symbolic of faithfulness for the idea in the Emperor's mind, he explained.

Akbar was much pleased at what Birbal said as he had a flash of such an idea before going to sleep. He ordered that all presents made to him in this town be given to the Raja of Jhusi to get a memorial erected and deputed his agents to get more money from Delhi as may be required from time to time for construction of the memorial. Having been impressed by the talk, manner and approach of Birbal the Emperor also ordered the Wazir (Birbal) to accompany him to Delhi.

The fort was thus, it is said, constructed by the Raja of Jhusi under the supervision of Birbal and this was why the Akshaiyavat, Patalpuri temple and the Saraswati Koop are inside it, being a Hindu idea.

It was the foresight of Birbal that he changed the course of the Ganga by constructing the Triveni bund with a view to saving the fort and also ensuring that the Raja's residence was not too close to the Emperor's fort.

In the olden days a jump into the river to death from Akshaiyavat was believed to lead to salvation (freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth). Prior to construction of this fort a number of such believers used to jump into the river from the tree. When it became a part of the fort entry to it was stopped and thus came to an end the practice of committing suicide for salvation from this tree. Thus Birbal with the concurrence of Emperor Akbar did a great service by getting the Akshaiyavat encircled by the fort walls.

After the death of Akbar attempts were made to burn Akshaiyavat. This tree withstood fire and the scars are visible even today. Entry to the fort for *darshan* (glimpse) of this tree is allowed to the pilgrims from the Yamuna side gate during the Mela period only.

Entry is unrestricted during specified hours for pilgrims and visitors to the Patalpuri temple inside the fort from its Ganga side gate. It is believed that when Akbar launched

upon the scheme for construction of the fort he had urged the priests to collect statues of gods and goddesses in the Patalpuri temple. This temple, which is underground, is visited by a large number of pilgrims from far and near daily.

The Saraswati Koop inside the fort, too, is opened to the pilgrims on the occasion of annual Magh Mela, Ardh Kumbh and Kumbh period to enable them to have its darshan. It is a very deep well and attempts to fill it up have been a failure. It is stated to be having its perennial source at the confluence of the two holy rivers. It is believed that the river Saraswati disappeared at this place.

When viewed from the Bhardwaj Ashram the geographical situation suggests that the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna would have been somewhere at a short distance from the famed Ashram of the sage. The localities of George Town, Tagore Town, Allahpur, Alopibagh, Bairahna and Kydganj must have been in the river bed. Thus Akshaiyavat inside the fort must have been at the Sangam in normal times when two rivers settled their respective courses after the rainy season. By constructing the two great bunds-Buxi Bund and Veni Bund – the course of the Ganga was changed by Birbal.

The ground stretching from Bhardwaj Ashram to Kydganj is downstream while Nagvasuki in Daraganj and Daraganj itself are on upland. The course of the Ganga was changed to take upland course by constructing the Buxi Bund. The result is that the slope of the Ganga between Nagvasuki and Sangam is equal to the slope of the river between Allahabad and Mirzapur. This is why the Ganga flows in fast currents even when its water level is reduced to a stream only.

The southern wall of the Fort, which had been constructed in dry bed of the Yamuna, collapsed beyond repair and reconstruction. This must have happened because the Ganga after its change of course from the Nagvasuki side after construction of the Buxi Bund gushed into the Yamuna stalling the latter's flow and thus created a massive whirlpool, which as the time passed on extended up to the southern outer wall of the fort, having become automatically unfathomably deep at this point.

A visitor to the Sangam would see for himself how the swift swirling currents of the Ganga gush deep into the Yamuna stalling the flow of the latter. A bewitching scene is created at the Sangam every moment. The scene of the rising and the setting sun at the Sangam, turning the waters into rich gold, is enchanting beyond imagination. From the ramparts of the fort a very good view of the Sangam can be had the year round. It offers most beauteous scenes during the rainy season when the rivers are in flood.

## TODARMAL'S DRUM TELEPHONE

Centuries before the invention of telegraph and telephone, the news of the birth of Salim, who ruled India as Jehangir, was conveyed to his father, Akbar, at Allahabad- a distance of 500 km from Agra-in less than two hours and 20 minutes.

According to a book “Prayag Darshan”, authored by two local journalists, Bal Krishna Pandey and Shiva Kumar Dubey, Akbar had to be in Allahabad in June 1569 on a military expedition and was very keen to know of the birth quickly.

Raja Todarmal, one of the “*nine jewels*” of the court, devised a novel method for transmission of the news. He got earthen mounds erected at every mile from Agra to Allahabad and stationed drummers atop them.

It did happen, and the drummers managed to reach the news at Allahabad in less than two hours and 20 minutes, as recorded in documents in Allahabad Fort, the book says.

## BADE HANUMAN TEMPLE AND SHRI HANUMAT NIKETAN

The Bade Hanuman Temple below the Triveni Bund in the Sangam area attracts a large number of pilgrims and devotees the year round from different parts of the country. In this temple one gets the *darshan* of Lord Hanuman's life-size statue lying on the ground with the head towards the north and feet towards the south direction.

Situated as it is in close proximity of the Sangam, where at the confluence of the two rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna, a great religious congregation is held every year in the month of Magh. Lakhs of pilgrims visit the temple in the annual Magh Mela and crores in the Ardh Kumbh and Kumbh Fairs held every sixth and twelfth year, respectively.

Great significance is attached to the *darshan* of Lord Hanuman in this temple which is underground. It is believed that when Emperor Akbar started construction of the Triveni Bund he wanted this statue to be shifted to Patalpuri Temple in the Fort in 1583. The attempts, however, failed as the ground on which the statue rested, caved in and it continued to cave in until the exercise was abandoned.

The statue of Lord Hanuman in this temple is unique in as much as it holds Shri Ram and Shri Lakshman in its left hand, a 'gada' in the right hand, presses Ahirawan under the right foot and Kamada Devi of Patalpuri under the left foot. It is difficult to find a statue like this of Lord Hanuman anywhere else.

The Baghambari Gaddi, which is linked with the Niranjani Akhara with its headquarters in the city, manages this temple. It opens at 5 a.m. daily with 'Mangal Aarati' and remains open till 2 p.m. for the visitors. It reopens with 'Shringar Aarati' at 5 p.m. and remains open till 8.30 p.m.

According to Mahant Baldeo Giri, one and a quarter kilo 'sindoor', one and a quarter kilo pure *ghee* and jasmin oil are applied to the statue and thereafter bathed with milk and Ganga water before 5 a.m. Red flowers, red cloth, red pennons and 'laddu' are the choicest offerings to the deity.

The statue at the site has been there for centuries. Buried in the sandy bed of the Sangam, it was first detected by a great saint, known as Baghambari Baba, who had come on the occasion of the Kumbh fair centuries ago. In his dream he had been

directed to dig up the ground to obtain the statue and after digging up it was discovered. Since then Baghambari Baba lived on the banks of the Sangam.

Aurangzeb is said to have had the *darshan* of Baghambari Baba and was impressed by his spiritual attainments. It is said that when the king went to meet the Baghambari Baba he (the Baba) had high fever. But he met the king transferring the fever for the period of conversation to his 'Baghambari'. This charisma charmed the king who requested the Baba to get rid of the fever to which the Baba is stated to have replied that this was due to his past actions. In case he got rid of it in this life it would follow him in the next as one had to reap the fruits of one's actions, good or bad. This statement impressed the king further and he donated a vast tract of land in Allahpur where the Baghambari Gaddi Math is situated. The *Shahi Farman* (Royal order) to the effect was in possession of Shri Baldeo Giri's predecessor Mahant Vicharanand who is no more.

About the statue it is said that a businessman was taking this statue in a boat to his native place for its installation. When the boat reached the present site it did not move any further. During night the businessman was directed in his dream to abandon the statue there and return home satisfied. The aim of his mission would be fulfilled, it was assured in the dream. The businessman is said to have left the statue there and it lay buried in till Baghambari Baba recovered it following a direction in his dream.

Whatever the truth behind this legend, the temple attracts a large congregation of devotees and is known all over the country. On Tuesdays and Saturdays the rush of visitors is very heavy the year round.

## SHRI HANUMAT NIKETAN

**T**he history of Shri Hanumat Niketan in Civil Lines is of recent past. Its foundation-stone was laid in 1958 and the Lord Hanuman idol was installed in 1973. The temple and associated temples, gymnasium, *yogalaya*, library, reading rooms, Ved Bhawan, guest house and a museum of weaponry on a three and a half acre land, known as Niketan complex, were constructed by 1974.

The beauty of this temple is that it is a one-man show. It was saint Ramlochan Brahmachari who raised this complex single handed collecting donations from Allahabad citizens only, moving out either on foot or on a cycle.

Brahmachariji, who left for heavenly abode in 1985, used to say that in Hanumat Niketan alone the idol of Lord Hanuman is worth worshipping as in all other temples the idols of Hanuman did not have all elements of the body. Hanuman is worshipped as '*jitendriya*' one who has control on all the senses. If the '*lingam*' is not there how could He be called '*Jitendriya*', he used to argue.

Besides, Shri Hanumat Niketan, he used to say, is '*daridranarain*' temple as he insisted on donation of a rupee only from all and sundry. There is no caste bar for entry to the temple and people of all faith are welcome to it.

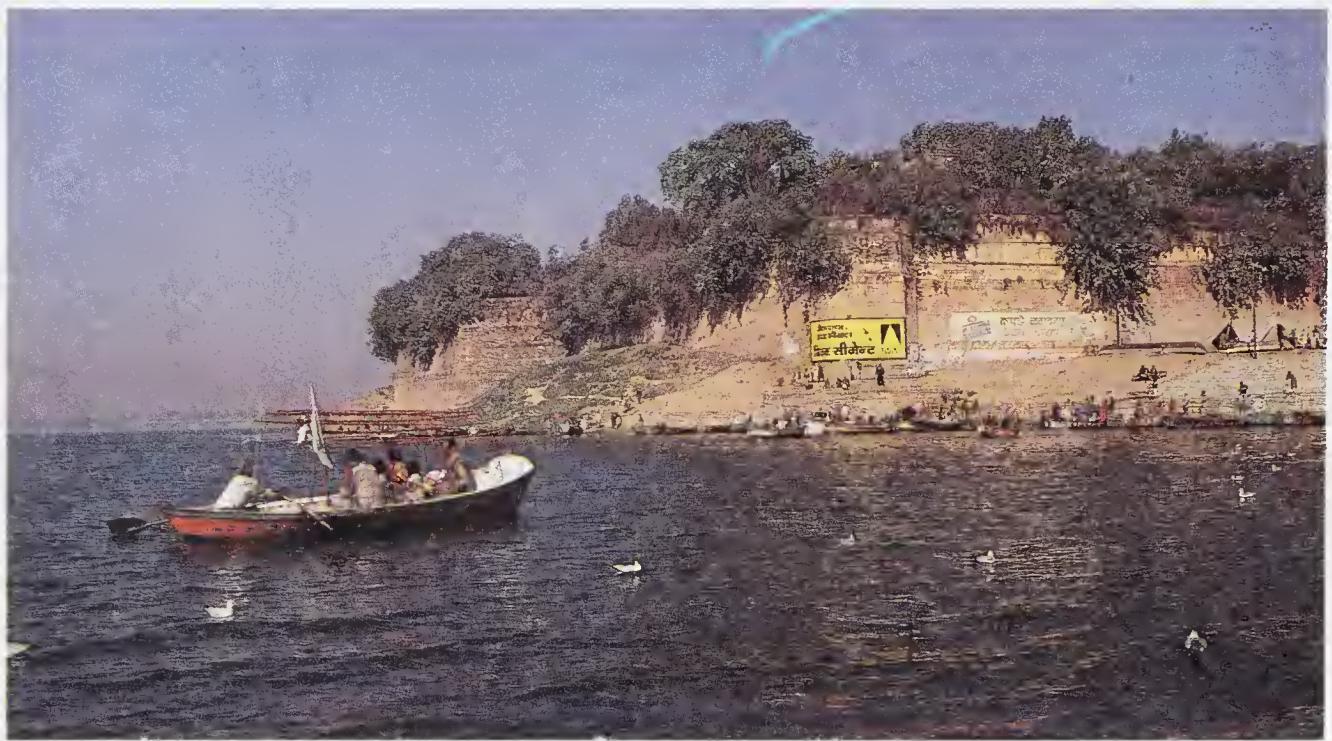
His preference for Lord Hanuman as the presiding deity of the temple was because Brahmachariji wanted the youth to inculcate in them the qualities of Lord Hanuman who is a symbol of Brahmacharya, knowledge and devotion to duty and service above self.



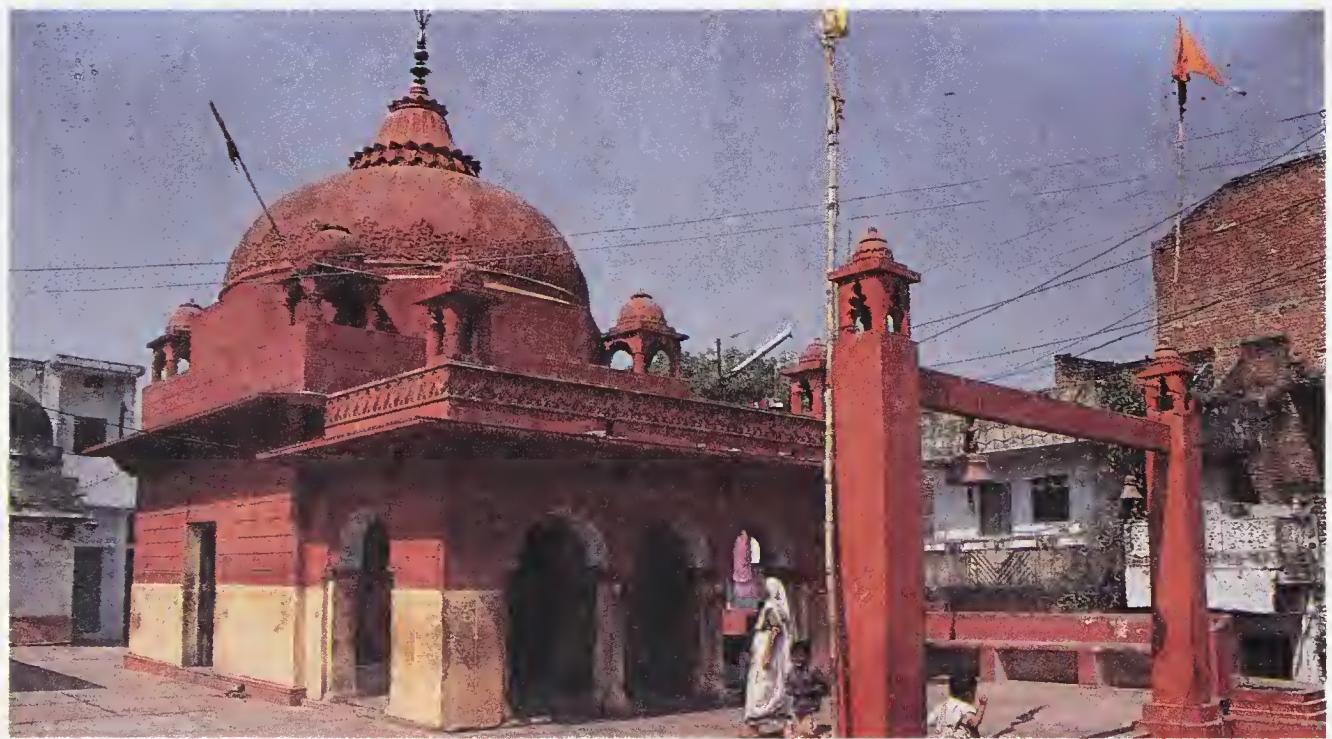
Shri Hanumat Niketan, Civil Lines



Saraswati Ghat



Historical fort situated on the bank of Sangam



Bhardwaj Ashram



Ashtadash Rudramandir, Alopibagh



Shankar Vimana Mandapam situated on Triveni dam



Brahmavidya Kendra situated in Companybagh



Sujavandeva temple situated in the centre of Yamuna near Ghurpur

## PRATISTHANPUR (JHUSI)

Pratisthanpur (Jhusi), situated on the eastern bank of the Ganga from north to south, is an ancient place of historical importance and pilgrimage, finding frequent mention in the Balmiki Ramayan, Devi-Bhagawat, Ling Puran, Matsy Puran, Kashi Khand, Padma Puran and Mahabharat.

The places of historical and religious interest still in existence in Pratisthanpur are Hanskoop and Hans-teerth, Samudrakoop, Kot Baba Dayaram, Grave of Sheikh Taqui and Chhatnag.

The Joshi Brahmins of Almora, Bainbanshiya Kshatriyas of Rewa and Sombanshiya Kshatriyas of Pratapgarh consider Pratishthanpur as the place of their origin, but none of these families presently reside in Jhusi.

It is said that Somavanshiya Kshatriyas had ruled Pratisthanpur. The Balmiki Ramayan and Devi-Bhagawat give descriptions of the earliest kings having ruled Jhusi.

The Ling Puran says that Ila's son Pururva had made Pratisthanpur his capital to the north of the Yamuna river near Prayag. It was after the name of Ila that Prayag was named Ilavas, which later came to be known as Allahabad.

According to the Ling Puran, Pururva was the son of Buddh (male) and Ila (female). Pururva's son was named Aayu, whose son was Nahush. The son of Nahush was named Yayati and he ruled this place.

The Matsy Puran and Skand Puran say that the place known as Pratisthanpur in the three *Lokas* (Worlds) is to the east of the Ganga in Prayag.

There are three interesting stories current about Jhusi, the first being of a Harbeng king under whose rule everything from vegetables to eatables were sold at one taka per ser (*take ser Bhaji, take ser khaja*) in Jhusi.

It is said that Jhusi had been overturned due to the curse of Baba Gorakhnath and his Guru Matsyendranath who was annoyed at the Harbengt king due to some reason.

Muslims say that in 1359 AD a big tremor due to curse of a Muslim Faquir overturned the fortress of Jhusi. These sayings are not supported by historical facts. It indicates that the wealth and grandeur of Jhusi had diminished.

A *Tamrapatra*, presently in the library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, had been

found in 1839 AD in Jhusi. It describes that Trilochan Pal, son of Rajyadeo Pal and grandson of Vijaideo Pal had donated a village to Brahmins of Pratisthanpur after a dip in the Ganga on the Makar Sankranti day after having performed *Pooja* of Lord Shankar. It was on June 26, 1027 (Shrawan Badi 4 Samvat 1084 Vikrami). This is said to be the earliest reliable Hindu record of this place historically.

## HANSKOOP AND HANSTEERTH

**T**he ancient Hanskoop finds mention in Matsy and Varah Puran. This is a pucca well. A bath with its water and drinking its water led one to salvation, it is believed.

Hansteerth is at a little distance to the south-west of Hanskoop. It is an Ashram of Sadhus of the Hans sect. This had been constructed by Atma Hans who had been a resident of district Bhagalpur. He was a Kshatriya Zamindar named Thakur Prasad who became a saint and took the name of Atma Hans.

This Hansteerth, taking in its entirety a betel-shape, was constructed by the saint in Samvat 1926 Vikrami on the principles of the Hath Yoga, based on the *Kundalini Yog* (the serpent power). The entire *Shatchakrabhedhan* system of the *Kundalini* is described in the form through images and various constructions.

The betel-shaped structure explains the location of the serpent power in body and its different stages after being aroused to reach the apex thousand petal lotus to enable man taste the celestial bliss.

The *Tantrik Granthas* make mention of the *Kundalini Shakti* in human body, as an “all-knowing power” endowed with knowledge of the movement of stars, planets and foretells happenings. This power is gained by those who attain the *Kundalini Siddhi*.

## SAMUDRAKOOP

**A**bout it a Sloka in the Padmapuran says:

“*Poorve parshwe Tu Gangayah*

*Trishu Lokeshu Bharat*

*Koopam Chaiv To Samudram*

*Pratisthanam Tu Vishrutam*

*Brahmachari Jitakrodh Triratram Yadi Tishthati*

*Sarvapap Vishuddhatma Soshwamedhphalam Labhet.*

(Maharshi Narad tells Yudhishthira that Samudrakoop, well-known in the three Lokas (three worlds), is situated to the east of the Ganga in Pratisthanpur. A Brahmachari, having full control on anger on spending three nights here is freed from all sins and obtains good results of Ashwamedh Yagya and his mind becomes pure).

The Matsy Puran in one of its *Slokas* says:

*Pratishane Mahan Kooph*

*Samudrakhya Virajate*

*Darshanat Yasya Papashcha*

*Naro Nishakalushobhawet*

*Amayasyam Poornamasyam*

*Chandra Surya Grahe*

*Tatha*

*Yad Parikramatah Bhoomi*

*Pradakshina Phalam*

*Bhawet.*

(Samudrakoop is situated in Pratisthanpur. Its *darshan* led to freedom from sin and purification of mind. By taking a round of the Samudrakoop on *Amawasya* or on *Poornima* nights or in periods of Lunar or Solar Eclipses one obtains the blissful results of having taken a round of the earth).

It is surmised that this *koop* (well) had been constructed by Samudragupta. It is 125 feet deep of which 25 feet is water. Its base at the depth is metallic and it is believed that if the metals at the water source are removed, there would be a great deluge (*Mahajalplavan*). Under this belief the *koop* had altogether been covered, but about 200 years ago Baba Sudarshan Das, a *Vaishnav* saint from Ayodhya, came and got this *koop* opened.

## KOT BABA DAYARAM

A room is preserved in this Ashram where Guru Nanak is stated to have performed *Tapasya* and stayed here for some time. It is also said that Guru Nanak had a dialogue with Kabir at this place. Gurugranth Sahib is worshipped here and this is connected with Akhara Panchayati Bara Udasin in Kydganj. There are several caves in which saints perform *Tapasya* here.

Adjacent to this ashram is believed to be the Urbasi Kund in the deep valley clothed with various kinds of trees and plants to the south of the Ashram. To its south is the place of Nirmal Akhara and again to its south-east the place of Bairagis. The Nirmali saints have, however, deserted the place.

## THE GRAVE OF SHEIKH TAQUI

This is situated on the eastern Ganga bank to the south of Samudrakoop. Sheikh Taqui was a renowned Muslim Saint who was born in 1320 A.D. and died in 1384 A.D. The grave attracts a large crowd of both Hindus and Muslims for blessings of the saint. A big fair is held here in the month of *Kartika* of Hindu calendar every year.

It is said that once Sheikh Taqui was annoyed with the Pratisthanpur ruler and due to his curse a big fire erupted. In this fire the area was half-burnt (*Jhulasgaya*) and thereafter it was named Jhusi.

Chhatnag is at some distance to the south of this grave. A *pucca* house was constructed there by Mathura Das, a Brahmachari from Ayodhya, about 200 years back, for *tapasya*. This is an enchanting place to the east of the Sangam.

A review of what has already been described gives a clear picture of the composite culture having been developed in Pratisthanpur and it can be proudly said that in miniature Jhusi is a symbol of unity in diverse faiths of Hindus and Muslims.

## REVEALING TRIP TO PRATISTHANPURI

“When the earth will be full of sinners and sins, water from the ‘Koop’ –well-will submerge the whole world. He who takes a round of the well on ‘Amavasya’ ‘Purnima’ and ‘Surya grahan’ (Solar eclipse) will get the result of making a full round of the universe. He who, during the month of *Magh*, takes a round, will get the result of performing one ‘Ashwamedh Yagy’ and the one, who stays here for three earthly days and nights and resolves to be away from all sinful acts, will get rid of all sins committed in the past.”

These inscriptions, claiming its origin in the ‘Matsy Puran’ are found on the ‘Samudra Koop’ the ocean well-in the ancient town of Jhusi.

Though all these are myths, the 107-year-old Mahant of the ‘Samudra Koop’ said in 1977 that during his lifetime he had seen at least twice the water level of the 170 feet deep ‘Koop’ rising menacingly. ‘You will probably not believe, as there is no explanation in your modern science that when we see the water level rising, we perform ‘Yagy and pujas’ and then it subsides.

Situated in one of the two outposts of the fort, built by king Pururwa, on the other side of the river Ganga, the well has an ancient history. It is said that four of the seven oceans flow beneath the well. The Mahant posed a strange challenge. He said that any one can test the water to authenticate the belief.

One of the most interesting features of the well is that its water level is a little above the Ganga plain. It takes one full ten minutes to climb the 250 stairs to reach the top of the fort outpost where the well is situated. The height would be approximately 300 feet from the Ganga plain. One of the senior police officers who accompanied me told a strange thing. He said that when efforts to dig out water were made on the Ganga plains, it proved futile till 15 feet depth and when water was visible it did not accumulate and so the argument could be placed that the water level of the ‘Samudra Koop’ was high because of accumulation and pressure of water.

The two fort outposts are in themselves fantastic. Each outpost has hundreds of small caves where in olden times ‘sadhus’ used to come for ‘tapasya’ and *mahasamadhi*.

It was a unique experience when I moved into the caves. Most of them were six feet long and two feet wide, the caves are made of a special mud which has stood the

test for thousands of years. I saw at least 100 saints living in the caves who had come as '*kalpavasis*' to the Kumbh.

A sadhu from Himalayas with only a small piece of cloth tied as '*kaupin*' was seen in meditation. I did not dare to disturb him, but as I was coming out I heard him chanting 'Oum Oum'. I stopped. The Sadhu called me. I was fascinated. I was barefoot. He gestured me to sit down. I did so. By that time I had started sweating frankly speaking because of fear. Disappointing me for an hour the Sadhu neither talked nor opened his eyes. I did not know what to do. Should I get up and go or sit there till he asks me to leave. After two full hours he again opened his eyes and looked at me, but did not talk. By that time I had exhausted all my patience. As I took out my hankerchief to wipe the perspiration, he asked me. "Who are you"? My excitement reached its peak. I murmured and told him I was a journalist covering the Kumbh. He sprinkled some water from his '*kamandlu*' and waved at me. He chanted 'Oum Oum', I advanced to touch his feet. He again waved his hand and instructed me to stop. Just at that time the Mahant was passing through the cave exit. He saw me and he came to my rescue. We then came out.

The Mahant told me that I was lucky to get the blessings of the Sadhu who has been coming here every year since 1948 and never talks. I told him he had talked, however, the Mahant did not believe me. With the evening sun setting at the confluence I proceeded for my camp, reflecting on the rich traditions and glory that our sadhus had.

## SRINGVERPUR AND BHARDWAJ ASHRAM

**A** new era has dawned on Sringverpur with archaeological finds dating back to 1100 BC. This site connected with the exile of Ram, Sita and Lakshman was excavated by the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla, in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India in 1977 when the then prime minister Indira Gandhi visited Sringverpur to inspect the finds and announced that it would be developed as a tourist spot.

It was then that the State Tourism Department started preparing plans for its development. That the visitors feel disenchanted with the place languishing for want of care indicates that the plans are yet to be implemented.

Sringverpur is 37-km from Allahabad city on the northern bank of the Ganga. It is linked with a pucca road from the Allahabad-Unnao road in Soraon *tehsil* of the district.

Of the four stages of development of civilisation, the first stage as fixed by Prof B B Lal, Director of the Simla institute, is 1100 to 1000 years BC on the basis of coloured potteries. There is a gap of 100 years and the second stage is fixed between 900 and 800 years BC on the basis of black slipped pottery and painted gray ware pottery typical of the Ramayana and Mahabharat period. These finds correlate with those found in Ayodhya where Prof Lal conducted excavation in 1976.

The third period is fixed between 600 and 200 BC on the strength of northern black polished wares, shining and typical of the Buddhist period. Terracotta images of goddesses and a copper vessel of fourth century BC have also been found.

The fourth period dating back to second and first century BC has been fixed on the basis of redware pottery, a tank, the earliest in India. The well is linked with a river channel for taking filtered water into the tank. Also unearthed are ringwell drainage system, house structures, punchmark copper coins, terracotta and stone sculptures of fourth to seventh century AD.

The religious importance of Sringverpur has been known since the time of Balmiki Ramayan. This place may be described as the second Ayodhya, being the scene of the parting of Ram, Sita and Lakshman with Sumant, the principal advisor to King Dasharath, who had brought the trio on a chariot on the command of the king to bring them back to Ayodhya after a dip in the Ganga at Sringverpur.

It was here that the Nishadraj, king of boatmen, Ram, Lakshman and Sita had met and arranged for their comfortable stay on the first night of their exile from Ayodhya and it was here that with Nishadraj's help in Prayag he had stayed at Sage Bhardwaj Ashram.

The 54<sup>th</sup> chapter of Valmiki Ramayan, giving a graphic description of Lord Ram and entourage nearing Prayag (Allahabad), says, "*Lord Ram crossed a dense forest to reach the place which is the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna and invisible Saraswati.* "Lord Ram tells his younger brother, "O, Lakshman, see, this is Prayag. The entire atmosphere is charged with bewitching smell of smoke emerging from places of Yagyas. The ripples of the two great holy rivers meeting at the Sangam are audible and definitely, we have reached Prayag, patronised by saints and seers."

The Hindu religion emphasises on the need for performing Yagyas, serious study of holy scriptures and dispensation of knowledge, as revealed in the Vedas and the holy scriptures, and considers serving the poor and the needy to be service to God. The ashram of Sage Bhardwaj had been a centre for these.

If one looked at the topography of the Sage Bhardwaj Ashram, it is apparent even today that the area right from Allenganj to North Malaka taking in its breadth the Allahabad University, Colonelganj and Katra localities, Darbhanga Castle, Allahabad Medical College and Swaroop Rani Hospital form one mound, sufficient for accommodating 10,000 disciples of Sage Bhardwaj. Even today if the Buxi Bund, the Triveni Bund and the Yamuna Bank are blasted, the two rivers, the Ganga and the Yamuna, would meet near the Ashram of Sage Bhardwaj.

Sage Bhardwaj is believed to have written Anshubodhini and Yantrarnava dealing with flying an aircraft with the help of solar energy and construction of aircrafts respectively. But these books are unfortunately not available. The world has yet to develop an aircraft to be run by solar energy. Discovery of the book and a deep study of the *mantras* credited to Bhardwaj may lead to rediscovery of the lost knowledge and the researchers in ancient knowledge should look for it.

Bharat, who had made a futile attempt at bringing back the trio to Ayodhya had also followed the same route, via Sringverpur to sage Bhardwaj Ashram.

Sringverpur is named after great Sage Shringi Rishi who is believed to have conducted a Yagy to fulfil king Dashrath's desire to have son. As a beneficial result of the Yagy four sons were born. The sons were named Ram, Lakshman, Bharat and Shatrughna.

King Dasharath offered to Sage Shringi Rishi his adopted daughter Shanta Devi whom the Sage later married.

There is a temple of Shanta Devi at Sringverpur, situated on the northern bank of the Ganga. A major portion of this temple has fallen into the river which makes constant onslaughts against it. Only the entrance gate of the temple exists still and men, women and children collect there on every full moon day to make floral offerings to the Goddess.

As to plans for development of Sringverpur, the then Sripatti Mishra Government in Uttar Pradesh had announced an ambitious scheme for developing the Ramayan sites tourist importance. These sites were Ayodhya, Sringverpur, Prayag and Chitrakoot. Some work was initiated but how far the scheme has been implemented is not yet known. As far as Sringverpur and Prayag are concerned nothing tangible has evidently been done so far.

The little that has been done at Sringverpur is construction of a ring road and planting of some 5,000 saplings, most of which have dried up. It has been proposed to stop erosion of the place by the Ganga and offer other facilities to tourists. The sooner the spot is developed the better.

## PRAYAG AS SEAT OF KRISHNA AND RAM CONSCIOUSNESS

Prayag has also served as an important seat of Krishna consciousness movement as it had been visited by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in 1500. He gave initiation to Roop Swami and had a spiritual discourse with Vallabhacharya, then residing in Arail, across the Sangam. Shri Chaitanya had stayed for some time with Vallabhacharya whose seat exists in Arail still.

Shri Chaitanya had initiated Roop Swami at Dashaswamedh Ghat of Daraganj where on one of the steps has been inscribed Roop *Shikshasthali* (the place where Roop Swami was given initiation).

After this initiation Roop Gaudiya Mission Math on Piparahiya Road in Tularambagh locality was established.

Nimbarki saints also established Radha-Krishna temples on the old G.T. Road near North-Eastern Railway level crossing in Bandariabagh (now Rambagh) and another Nimbarki Ashram in Chowk.

More recently, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has raised a beautiful temple in Gaughat area. So the stream of Krishna Consciousness continues to flow unabated here.

Swami Ramanand, the first Acharya of Ram Bhakti movement was born in Prayag some time in the year 1300. He was disciple of Swami Raghavacharya of the south, who generated a powerful *Ram Bhakti* movement across the country opening its floodgate to both classes and masses.

Varanasi and Mathura (Vrindavan) became focal points of Vaishnav *Bhakti* movement flowing in two distinct streams of Ram *Bhakti* and Krishna *Bhakti*. The Ram *Mantra* movement started from Kashi (Varanasi) and Krishna Mantra from Mathura-Vrindavan and these two streams of Ram-Krishna Consciousness gained tremendous momentum taking into its stride the entire country between 1300 and 1600 when classes and masses were soaked deep in the *Bhakti* cult creating the best literary work of the time.

Swami Raghavacharya, Swami Ramanandacharya, Saint Kabir Das, Sant Tulsi Das spread the Ram *Mantra* on one side while Swami Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Nimbarkacharya etc. concentrated on Krishna *Mantra* on the other. How could Prayag, a centre of great minds, remain unaffected?

While Swami Raghavacharya, Ramamanandacharya, Tulsi Das stressed on Ram Bhakti and complete surrender to power manifestation, Kabir stressed on knowledge of Brahman, but Saint poet Soordas sang the glory of Lord Krishna.

It would be enlightening to take a look at the Krishna Consciousness movement. For instance, Jiva Goswami of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu *Bhakti* cult based on Shri Bhagawatam holds that God is one homogeneous unit of consciousness and bliss. There is no material difference in His nature. There is no quality other than consciousness and bliss in Him.

As against this Ramanuja advocates internal difference between Him and the finite selves and the world, which are His attributes (*Visesana*), and recognises inseparable relation. (aprihakasiddhi) between them.

Jiva, however, criticises Ramanuja's view, but Madhvacharya reconciles many qualities of God with his conception of *Visesa*. He harmonises the plurality of finite selves and physical things with the entity of God with the help of *visesa*, although he advocates internal difference among them. Jiva criticises Madhva's view as well. Yet Jiva's doctrine of inconceivable identity-in-difference (*achinyabhedabhed*) serves the same purpose as Ramanuja's doctrine of internal difference and inseparable relation and Madhava's doctrine of *Visesa*.

Jiva agrees with Madhva that God is harmony of contradictory powers and qualities. Though Sanatan and Rupa Goswami suggest the doctrine of supra-rational identity-in difference, Jiva has the credit of firmly establishing it on a philosophical foundation which was elaborated further by his followers.

The Gaudiya Mission founded by Jiva Goswami during the 12<sup>th</sup> century with Rupa Goswami as its first President, both disciples of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, stresses on Divine Love which is attainable only by cultivating the function of the soul as distinct from those of the physical body and the material mind.

It says that the limitations that hamper the activities of the physical body and the material mind are not found in their unwholesome form on the plane of the soul. These can neither be suppressed nor eliminated, but transcended by the realisation of fact that the soul itself is distinct from the physical body and the material mind.

The mission identifies religion as a means to reinstate the soul in the state of its

natural activity or to re-adjust the soul-an infinitesimal absolute with the infinite absolute-the Supreme Lord by means of loving service to Him.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with his cult of Krishna Consciousness and Sankirtan of Hari Naam held a great sway on the people from Bengal to Mathura-Vrindavan covering the States of Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh proclaimed with applause the saying of Brihad Naradiya Puran (38/126) Verse) in Chaitanya Charitamrit, Aadi Chapter VII Verse 76:

*The name of Hari, the Name of Hari*

*Oh, the Name of Hari alone*

*Nothing else in Kaliyug, nothing else,*

*Nothing else could lead us to God.*

The practice of spiritual life is not a straight-jacket and this has been a commonly recognised principle in India. Any efficient teacher must give to his disciples of different abilities and temperaments different practical directions. This would be his 'skill in means'. It may, however, be contended that although the practical directions may vary according to expediency, the basic statements of beliefs or credo must be uniform and all variations must be within a consistent system. While this demand for consistency and system within a doctrine is inevitable from the stand point of logical thought, it is plainly inadequate for the nature and expression of mystical truth.

Pure knowledge is independent of sensory perception. It is attained through the process of inward recession which leads to a state in which diversity merges into all-embracing unity.

The Upanishads direct that the wise should offer the speech (all the senses) in the sense-mind, that in the knowledge-self, the knowledge self in the great-self and that in the calm-self, thus revealing the process of knowing the Knower.

This explains the diversity and inherent unity in Indian thought, culture and tradition of which the Kumbh Parv is a representative feature. The search for life enforcing

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Source: Jiva Goswami's conception of God by J.N. Sinha P230 in Gopinath Kaviraj Abhinandan Granth.

Source: Outlines of Gaudiya Mission, Published by Gaudiya Mission, Baghbazar, Calcutta-3-1977 Pages 4 and 7.

Prof G C Pandey in his learned article, 'The Origin of Mahayana' appearing on page 166 to 179 in the said volume -

elements is the essence of all religious and spiritual practices as envisioned in the Kumbh tradition. It is here in Kumbh that discerning minds may see multiplicity of diversity merging into emotional integrity and unity diversified.

It is no wonder that the great minds preaching diverse ways (religions) for realisation of self had been patronising Kumbh to influence the pilgrims and expose to them their technique of self-realisation to improve their self to face the life fearlessly.

In poetic ecstasy the *Triveni* (Sangam) has been extolled even by Urdu poets. Sheikh Imam Bux 'Nasikh' says in a couplet which translated into English reads:

*The three rivers and my two eyes,*

*Make Allahabad and Punjab alike.*

*Maulana 'Safi' Lucknavi says;*

*O, allahabad: Thou art the playing ground of Ganga and Yamuna.*

*Thy sacred soil is the association of the three streams;*

*Communities learn lessons of fraternity and unity from thee.*

*Thy confluence is a symbol of communal harmony;*

*Thy cup is overflowing with compassion and sympathy,*

*Thy drinking den is an asylum for the sick and the weary.*

## RAMDAL PROCESSION

The Ramdal processions, which are taken out in this city during Dussehra celebrations have a history dating back to some two centuries and they are popular because of their pivotal role in arousing the people during the freedom movement.

The tableaux taken out in the processions of Pajawa and Patharchatti Ramlila Committees depicted mythological, historical and social scenes to arouse patriotic feelings, nationalistic ideas, rebellion and revolt against the then British rulers. Tableaux depicting Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, the Jalianwalabagh Massacre Mahatma Gandhi with spinning wheel inspired in viewers patriotic feelings with an urge to free the nation from foreign rule.

With the city's expansion and phenomenal population growth Ramdal processions are now being taken out almost in every locality. Allahpur (Bhardwaj Nagar), Sohabatiabagh-Madhwapur are the latest additions on the sixth day of Ramlila with a joint Pajawa-Patharchatti Ramdals on the Vijai Dashami Day.

The Pajawa and Patharchatti Ramlila committees are the oldest, though there is some doubt as to which of these was the first to be formed. The Allahabad Gazeteer of 1824 says that Ramlila processions were taken out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The history of Pajawa Ramlila committee is available from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The founder of this committee was Baba Hathiram of the Ramanandi Vaishnav sect.

The Hathi Baba Ramdal procession was taken out from a temple in Shahganj locality of the city. It was Baba Hathiram who arranged for the staging of Ramlila in a planned way with "Bharat Milap and Rajgaddi" ceremonies. Later, this Ramlila committee was known as Khatri Ramlila committee and still later as Pajawa Ramlila Committee.

It was Lala Manohar Das, a well-known banker of northern India, who started managing the entire show of Pajawa Ramlila Committee after Baba Hathiram and since then the descendants of Lala Manohar Das, now headed by Hari Mohan Das Tandon, manage the show.

There are evidences of Baba Hathiram arranging the staging of Ramlila and taking out the Ramdal procession since 1864. Baba Nrisingh Das, disciple of Baba Hathiram, took a leading part in arranging the show during the period between 1884 and 1885. He had then made an application to a magistrate for proper security of Ramdal procession.

It was during the period of Baba Hathiram that the starting point of the Ramdal procession was changed from Shahganj to the open ground near the DAV college in view of hindrances to the procession because of an overbridge-known as Jhanjharia bridge.

The processions then were taken out by candlelight and big lamps illuminated the route till the advent of electricity in the town. Decorations of the tableaux started in 1916 when goldsmiths joined hands to prepare artistic tableaux. In 1918, the Ramlila procession could not be taken out because of interference by the British rulers. In 1924 the processions were banned for inciting people against the then rulers.

The fourth AICC conference was held in 1888 in Allahabad. Following this, tableaux depicting Mahatma Gandhi with his spinning wheel, torture of patriots in jail, Bharat Mata etc. were taken out in the Ramdal processions. Such tableaux earned appreciation in the entire northern provinces and the British rulers ordered an inquiry.

In 1917 the British incited some elements among other communites to create trouble during the Ramdal procession and in 1918 the procession could not be taken out. The Ramlila Committees had discussions with the collector of the United Provinces, Commissioner and the Governor, whereupon a schedule of processions was decided and there was a ban on raising the slogan of "*Ram Chandra Ki Jai*".

There was trouble again in 1924 and in 1925 when communalism was introduced by the then government to forestall the celebrations and the Ramlila committees stopped taking out the processions.

Ramlila could not be started and the Ramdal processions could not be taken out between 1925 and 1936. The tradition was revived, however, in 1937 and continued uninterrupted till 1942. Even during the Mughal period the processions were not taken out but people managed to stage Ramlila in their localities.

The Pajawa and Patharchatti Ramlila committees have their long history. The Bajrang Dal of Daraganj and the Katra Ramlila Committee, too, had been formed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In Daraganj Ramdal of 1920 there were two tableaux depicting the enthusiasm for freedom struggle, and in Patharchatti Ramdal six. Similarly in 1921 the British had objection to two tableaux in Daraganj Bajrang Dal, six in Katra, 14 in Pajawa and three in Patharchatti.

In the Ramdal processions of 1923 there were tableaux on themes of untouchability and emancipation of Dalits and backward classes. There were communal disturbances in 1924. Pt Motilal Nehru, Maulana Liaquat Hussain, Dr Shafa-at Ahmed Khan, Purushottam Das Tandon, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Ramakant Malaviya, Anandi Prasad Dubey, Sawal Das Khanna, Kapil Deo Malaviya etc. tried their best to avert the clash but a settlement could not be arrived at.

Prohibitory orders under section 144 Cr. P.C. were promulgated on September 14, 1925 when the Dussehra celebrations were to be started from September 17. Despite best efforts of the public leaders and the Ramlila committee office-bearers, permission for taking out the procession was not given. This act of the then government was condemned not only in Allahabad but even in Agra, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Jabalpur, Lucknow, Sitapur, Fatehpur and Delhi. Efforts at taking out the procession in 1927 too failed.

The Ramlila committees faced several storms, but they never relented in their efforts at reviving the great tradition of Ramlila processions, which even today attracts lakhs of people.

## PRAYAG AS SHAKTIPEETHA

Prayag is not only Teertharaj, but also a Mahashaktipeeth, occupying a place of pride among 51 Shaktipeethas across the country. It is Vaishnava's Vishnu-Lakshmi Peeth known also as Veni-Madhav and Triveni. It is a Siddh peeth also for the Shaivites and Shaktas. For Vaishnavites it is Kamala or Madhaveshwari peeth with Veni Madhav, presiding deity of Prayag, as the Bhairao. For Shaktas it is Lalitapeeth with Bhav (Lord Shiv) as the Bhairao.

There are three temples- Lalita Alopshankari Devi, Lalita Kalyani Devi and Lalita Devi-at three different locations Alopibagh, Kalyani and Meerapur-localities respectively, all the three have the importance of Lalitapeeth and are worshipped as such, though the exact location of the Lalita Peeth is disputed.

In Lalita Alop Shankari Temple there is no statue of the main deity. Instead there is a raised platform with a shallow dent in the middle topped by a decorated 'Jhoola' which swings and offerings of coconut etc. are made on it. It is believed that fingers of the Sati (consort of Lord Shiv) had fallen at this place and as such hand-made eatables are offered as '*Prasad*'.

There is a temple of Aindri Devi at a 30 km distance to the east of the Sangam near Sage Durvasa Ashram. In the 'Kavach' of Shri Durga Saptashati in Markandey Purana Goddess Aindri Devi is described as seated on an elephant. Sage Durvasa had worshipped Her on a suggestion of Sage Bhardwaj for trouble free completion of his *Yagya* there.

To the north-west of the Sangam at a 70 km distance is the Shaktipeeth Karadham of Goddess Sheetala Devi and Bhairao Kaleshwara Shiv Lingam. It is believed that hands of the Sati (Parvati) had fallen there.

Kara is a historic and religious place. It was known also as Kal Nagar and Karkot Nagar as well, Kal Nagar because of Kaleswar Shiv and Karkot Nagar because of Sati's hands having fallen there. Muslim traveller Ibna Batuta had visited this place in 1340 and described it as a place of pilgrimage for Hindus.

Thus, one may find that Prayag is surrounded by a string of temples of the Goddess in a 120 km radius, including Varanasi and Mirzapur where Goddess is Vishalakshi (Varanasi and Vindhayasini in Vindhyaachal (Mirzapur). According to the Devi Bhagawat, Lalita Devi is the presiding deity of Prayag- '*Prayage tu Lalita Devi, Varanasyam Vishalakshi, Vindhya Vindhayasini.*'

The *Tantra Granthas* give three names as the presiding deity of Prayagapeeth-Lalita, Kamala and Madhaveshwari. But Lalita has a more popular recurring reference.

Why is Prayag the king of shaktipeethas as well?

In Sadhana issue of Baba Bhootnath Dham, Lucknow, Pt. Ram Narain Shastri has in his learned article written about the Prayag Shaktipeeth. He writes:

*To the east of the Ganga there is Bagala up-peeth, to the north of the Ganga the Chamunda up-peeth, to the south of the Yamuna the Bhuvaneshi up-peeth and at the confluence the Rajarajeshwari main peeth. The exact location of the peeth in Prayag is uncertain. Goddess Lalita is enshrined near the sacred banyan tree in the Allahabad Fort. There is another temple of Lalita in the Mirapur locality of the city and then there is a temple of Alopi in the locality known as Alopibagh, which of the three is the original peeth is not beyond doubt, but people generally believe the temple of Alopi to be the real one.*

The Lalita Temple as indicated by Mr. Shastri near the banyan tree in the Allahabad Fort is not in existence. May be, the temple had existed there before the fort was constructed. But today its trace even is not available. The nearest temple of the goddess from the banyan tree (Akshaiyavat) in the fort is Alopi temple which is to the north-west of the sacred tree at a one km distance.

There is a temple of Imilian Devi to the south of Yamuna. The deity is also known as Masurian Devi. Perhaps this is the Bhuvaneshi up-peeth.

In Prayag Mahatmya Shatadhyayi a verse gives location of Lalita peeth saying that to the north of Sangam is situated the Lalitapeeth which is also described as Kalyani. The Goddess fulfills desires of all those who have Her *darshan* and worship Her.

Lalita Alopi Shankari and Kalyani Devi are respected and worshipped as Lalita Devi, Alopi Shankari being nearest to the indicated spot and Kalyani carrying the alternative name in Attarsuiya locality. Lalita Devi temple, not far off from Kalyani in Meerapur too carries the same weight because of the original name of the Shaktipeeth as Lalita. Mr. Shastri, however, in his article 'Shaktipeethas of India' does not refer to Kalyani temple as the Lalitapeeth. But by faith and tradition this temple in Attarsuiya enjoys the same prominence.

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Source : Prayag in 'Shaktipithas of India on P. 21 in Sadhana Year 1, Navaratra Chaitra Samvat 2033 Vikrami (corresponding to 1976), Edited and published by Dr Jagadamba Prasad Sinha for Shri Bhootanatha Ashram, Kamakhya Dham, Lucknow

There is a famed Kali temple, known as Kalibadi in Muthiganj locality of the city. Kali is the first *Vidya* (knowledge). She predates *Shiv-Kalateeta Kali*, Who is *Adi Vidya* (*Adya*) and first of the ten *Mahavidyas*. She is credited with activating Lord Shiv and without Her company Shiv is said to be like a dead body.

This Kali temple had been established in 1860 by Swami Krishnanand, resident of Kalna *tehsil* of Burdwan district in West Bengal. He passed into eternity on the bank of the Ganga in Vindhyananchal (Mirzapur) in 1886.

The presiding deity Kali has been installed in the Kalibadi temple, as directed in the Tantrik system on a *Panchanarmundi Asana* (seat of five heads of the dead).

The late Rashbihari Ghosh had donated his piece of land in 1863 for the temple. The temple was renovated in 1953 by late H K Ghosh alias Patal Babu. The proprietors of Maya Press and the Indian Press are actively involved in maintenance of this temple which is a great centre of faith for all, specially the Bengali community of the city.

The Lalita Prayagpeeth is believed to have given birth to alphabet 'Ph' of the Deonagari Script.. Some Tantra Granthas say that there are 64 Shaktipeethas while some others say that the main Shaktipeethas are 51 only and each of the 51 Shaktipeethas has given birth to one alphabet. The Deonagari script alphabets number 51. Perhaps, it is because of this that Hindi script is known as the Devanagari script.

These Goddess temples attract a great congregation of devotees from far and near. The couples, who got issues as blessings of the Goddess, generally named them after her. The Shaktas from Bengal attach great importance to the Lalita Devi temple on the Yamuna bank in Meerapur and make it a point to have *darshan* of the Goddess there. Since it is situated near the Kakaraha burning ghat the Goddess is worshipped as Tara Devi as well.

There is also a Siddheshwari temple of ninth form of goddess Durga in Civil lines opposite the Tourist Bungalow. This temple is also a Seedha Peeth, claims its founder Kali Baba.

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Source:

Sadhana issue of Bhootnath Dham, Lucknow

Teerthon ka Teertha Prayag, Shabdapith, Allahabd Pages 121, 82 to 88 and 121 and 122.

## KUMBH IN 1822

**T**he Kumbh fair in 1822 was not as big and lively (as it is today), according to Bahadur Singh Bhatnagar, a Persian scholar of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Writing in “Yadgare Bahaduri”, a Persian Encyclopedia, compiled in 1840, he says that during 1822 Kumbh the entire Ganga and Yamuna belts wore a deserted look with vast stretches of unlevelled sandy bed.

The number of sadhus and pilgrims who visited the Kumbh “*has declined owing to the risks and difficulties involved in undertaking the journey.*” The main reason was lack of basic facilities in the Mela area, besides exorbitant pilgrim tax of one rupee and four annas to be paid to the ‘firangi jambooriyat’ (British Government).

Bhatnagar says that this tax was too high for a common pilgrim. It could be gauged from the fact that in those days an individual could easily afford to meet his food expenses for the whole month in one rupee. It was later, he says, that Lord Auckland on the advice of some “prominent Bengali gentlemen” abolished the pilgrim tax and released the temple endowments from all official control.

Describing the Kumbh fairs of those days, he says, *Without paying pilgrim tax no one was allowed to take dip at the Sangam. There was no proper administrative arrangement made for the Kumbh in 1822. There were no proper roads, no lighting, sanitary, toilet, or drinking water arrangements for the pilgrims.*

He says, *for easing themselves the pilgrims and others went to nearby fields, the drinking water was fetched from the river and for lights they used earthen lamps, lantern or ‘mashals’.* The British Government set up a few barrier posts where pilgrim tax was realised and deployed policemen at strategic points to ensure peace and order.

The small ‘qasba’ (township) that used to spring up below the Bund consisted of thatched Akharas (preaching houses) and shops. There were shops of grocers, brass vessels, religious books, rosaries and other sacred objects and ‘naotankis’ (theatres) showing scenes from the Mahabharat, the Bhagavat Gita and Shri Ramcharit Manas.

Giving details of life in those days during the “kalpavas”, he says *a large number of sadhus, saints clad in saffron and white clothes with long beards and rosaries in their hands were seen surrounded by disciples performing pujas, delivering discourses or chanting mantras or vedic hymns in seven “Akharas” created by Adi*

*Shankaracharya to reorganise various orders of sanyasins to promote religious unity.*

*Pilgrims were seen taking dip at the Sangam, performing pujas with the help of teerth-purohitas and pandas and giving alms to the poor.*

Scenes of religious fervour marked the Kumbh as it served as an ideal meeting place for learned men, sadhus and disciples of various ‘Akharas’. Mahamandaleshwaras, religious heads of organisations during the month-long ‘kalpavas’ also organised *bhandaras* to feed the poor and hungry.

*The chanting of hymns, blowing of conch shells, delivering of pravachans coupled with devotional music and yagyas near the ceaseless and silent flowing rivers combined carnival environment with serenity and solemnity, he says.*

The scholar adds that the expenditure incurred for deploying police was met by the licencing fees of boatmen, barbers, hawkers and ground rents for putting huts. A big amount went to the British treasury in terms of pilgrim tax.

Though the exact number of pilgrims and saints could not be ascertained yet they were in a few thousands despite risks involved in travelling as there were few roads and no safety from roadside robbers and the mode of transport being horses, camels, elephants, bullock-carts or on foot. Those who came on foot had stuff in their hands and big bundle consisting of necessary clothes, utensils and edibles. The majority of pilgrims from far off places were old.

The ‘Gang’ and ‘Jaman’ (Ganga and Yamuna), the scholar says, had been changing their course and their length, breadth and depth were not uniform. The Triveni was somewhere near Arail or near Jhusi or near Fort. The source of invisible Saraswati was a ‘*kund*’ on the southern side of Fort which was hidden by shrubs.

The places of pilgrimage at this time were Bharadwaj Ashram, Akshaiyavat, Nag Basuki, Bade Hanumanji, Veni Madhav Temple, Patalpuri, Samudrakoop. Daraganj and Kydganj localities were there and the city was about two kms from the Allahabad Fort.

## A BRITON'S A VIEW OF 1870 KUMBH

*Each Hindu who shaves off his hair above the chin and throws it into the Ganges, gets relief from re-birth for thousands of years to come, as the Prayag Mahatmya, a religious scripture of the Hindus, promises release from 10,000 re-births for every hair sacrificed in the sacred Hindu style at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna."*

Continuing his dispatch on the Kumbh mela of 1870, E.L. Brown, the English journalist who came to Allahabad to cover the Mela wrote, "Pilgrims attending the Magh Mela are conducted by the Prayagawals on a regular round of religious observance. Few of the directions in that book are now observed. And sometimes all are omitted, save shaving, bathing and paying fees.

*"A pilgrim on his first visit should offer a coconut to Beni Madho-the deity of Tribeni, but the practice is not common. As a general rule, after reaching his Prayagawal's ghat and taking off his clothes, the pilgrim is sent to 'Naua-barā' or the barber's quarter and there shaved."*

Referring to the privileges of some people in observing the rules and regulations for the 'holy dips', Brown says, "Residents of Allahabad are not obliged to have their heads shaved. While a man whose father is alive will not part with his moustaches, widows and women from southern provinces, whether they have husbands or not, shave entirely.

*"The barber's usual fee is one or two pice (paise) and the shaven hair, which at one time was sold by contracts and subsequently used to be buried in the sands, is now taken away by boats, tied in bundles and thrown into the deep part of the river. Shaving is necessary because hair is considered unclean."*

Giving minute details on the observances of the religious Hindu pilgrims who visited Allahabad from far-flung areas, Brown wrote, "The next act is that of bathing, and for the vast majority the ceremony is very simple and is accompanied by the gift of some pice (paise) to the Prayagawal.

*"Those who wish to make a special offering, hold in their right hand the money, the ear of the goat or horse, the tail of the cow or the tusk of the elephant while the 'panda' makes a special prayer with assurance to the pilgrim that his special prayer will be fulfilled.*

Commenting on the behaviour of the 'pandas' and the like, Brown wrote, "*On the day of bathing the bather is supposed to fast, but the Prayagawals seldom take the trouble of informing their clients of their duties. They may leave when they have been paid their fees which consist of the utmost the Prayagawal can extort, and when the 'jajman' has satisfied his priest, the latter gives him blessings, striking him three times on the back and pronouncing him 'suphal'.*

## MARK TWAIN VISITS 1895 KUMBH

America's greatest ambassador of friendship and goodwill Mark Twain paid a visit to Allahabad during the Kumbh period of 1895. His visit to the city was a part of round-the world lecture tour. By 1895 Samuel Clemens-this being Mark Twain's real name-had already established his position all over the world as one of America's foremost writers and as her greatest humourist. Twain came to this religious capital of India in the company of 'some more tramps' evidently to fathom the cultural heritage of India justifying his name -Mark Twain, meaning 'two fathoms of water' used by pilots taking soundings on the river.

It is not surprising that the great books of the local *pandas* have not recorded his visit. But it is rather curious that the columns of the Pioneer, the only English Daily of the time, published from Allahabad, failed to make any reference to his trip to Prayag.

Mark Twain later expressed regret over the fact that he had to stay in Civil Lines and that he could not visit the crowded areas of the city where the teeming millions live. He says:

*Allahabad means the city of God. It is a town of wide avenues and noble distances and is comely and alluring and full of suggestions of comfort and leisure, and of serenity which a good conscience buttressed by a sufficient bank account gives.*

Twain's visit coincided with the biggest religious congregation of the world at Prayag in session just beyond the famous Fort of Akbar. In the early brightness together with some other innocents abroad', he went for a long drive out to the Fort and struck into the hot plain and found the roads crowded with pilgrims of the both sexes.

Describing his experiences of the visit to the Sangam where full Kumbh mela was being held Mark Twain says.

*These pilgrims had come from all over India, some of them had been months on the way, plodding patiently along in the heat and dust worn, poor, hungry but supported and sustained by an unwavering faith and belief. It is wonderful the power of a faith like that can make multitudes upon multitudes of the old and weak and the young and frail enter without hesitation or complaint upon such incredible journeys and endure the resultant miseries without repining. It is done in love or it is done in fear I do not know which it is, the act born of it is beyond imagination, marvellous to our kind of people, the cold whites.*

Twain had a fine view of the confluence of the three rivers from the rampart of the Fort and the faithful millions gathered around. He writes.

*On a long curved spit between the rivers towns of tents were visible with a multitude of fluttering persons, and mighty swarm of pilgrim crowds were bathing, praying and drinking the purifying waters. There were Fakirs in plenty with their bodies dusted over with ashes and their long hairs caked together with cowdung. There was a holy man who sat naked by the day and by the week on a cluster of iron spikes and did not seem to mind it; and another man who stood all the day holding his withered arms motionless aloft; and was said to have been doing it for years. All these performers have a cloth on the ground beside them for the receptions of contributions, and even the poorest of the people give a trifle and hope that the sacrifice will be blessed to them. At last came a procession of naked holy people marching by and chanting and I wrenched myself away.*

About the Fort of Akbar who preached Din-e-Ilahi. Twain made the following remarks.

*The Fort is a huge old structure and has had a large experience in religions. In its great court stands a monolith which was placed there more than two thousand years ago to preach Buddhism by its pious inscriptions-the fort was built three centuries ago by a Mohammedan Emperor-a resanctification of the place. In the interest of that religion there is a Hindu temple too with subterranean ramifications stocked with shrubs and idols and now that the Fort belongs to the English.*

Twain arrived in Bombay in January and after visiting Allahabad, Varanasi, Bodh Gaya, Calcutta and some other places left India on March 30. He recorded his experiences of the visit in his book 'More Tramps Abroad'. Giving his impressions of India visit he writes.

*This is indeed India. The land of dreams and romances, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendour and rags, of famine and pestilence, of palaces and hovels, of gentle and giants and Alladin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of a hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million Gods, cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legends, great grandmother of tradition whose yesterdays bear date with the moulding antiquities of the rest of the nations-the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant for tattered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bound and free, the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse would not give that glimpse for the show of all the rest of the globe combined.*

## KUMBH CONGREGATION SINCE 1906

*Although many twentieth century westerners tend to view the practice of religion incompatible with living in modern world, and while membership in many churches and synagogues dwindles each decade. Hinduism is as strong as ever. Indeed, in India it is vital to contemporary life.”*

This observation of Stephen P. Huyler, an American researcher in Indian life, culture and traditions of religious practices, in his latest book ‘Meeting God’ is proved true by the Kumbh congregation through the twentieth century since 1906 Kumbh in Allahabad.

In 1989 Kumbh the congregation was estimated at 2 crore, though official arrangements had been made for 1.5 crore pilgrims in view of nearly 1 crore pilgrims recorded to have visited the 1977 Kumbh when the official arrangements had been made for 70 lakh pilgrims.

The Ardh Kumbh crowd in 1995 was estimated at 3 crore. Though some disputed it, the figure was placed at between 1.30 crore and 2 crore.

**Huyler in his book rightly observes:**

*“One of the most common phrases used by Indians today to describe their actions is, “This is my duty”. By duty they mean that an action is beyond choice, it is a part of dharma. By doing whatever is required they are fulfilling their roles as conscientious Hindus, attending to their cosmic ebb and flow, the innate reciprocity that governs all existence<sup>2</sup>.*

India had been struggling hard to free itself from the foreign rule and subjugation till almost middle of the twentieth century and consolidating itself as a vibrant nation trying to keep pace with the modern advancements in the fields of science and technology, space and oceanology.

Huyler has noted even this aspect of the Indian life, saying – “In spite of this adherence to traditions India is a modern country. Almost every person throughout the sub-

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1. Source : Soul of Family in ‘Meeting God’, written by Stephen P. Huyler, PP 74, Publisher, Yale University Press New Haven and London 1999)

2. Concept of Devotion in ‘Meeting God’ PP. 39.

3. The soul of Family in ‘Meeting God’ PP 72.

4. Source 1989 Kumbh Mela Administrative Report upto 1989 PP. 13 by Mr. J.N. Dwivedi, IAS Officer-in-Charge Kumbh Mela, Published by Director, Rajkiya Mudran Avam Lekhan Samagri, Allahabad (UP) 1994.

continent used some form of contemporary technology and is aware of the advances promoted through innovative education.”<sup>3</sup>

And Huyler is perhaps right. The following table shows a steady increase in Kumbh and Ardh Kumbh congregation except in 1942 when the country had waged a nation-wide decisive struggle for independence under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>4</sup>

Kumbh	Congregation	Ardh Kumbh	Congregation
1906	25 lakh	1912	20 lakh
1918	30 lakh	1924	30 lakh
1930	40 lakh	1936	25 lakh
1942	12 lakh	1948	30 lakh
1954	60 lakh	1960	35 lakh
1966	70 lakh	1971	70 lakh
1977	100 lakh	1981	100 lakh
1989	150 lakh	1995	100 lakh

From the above chart we know that the twentieth century opened with the Kumbh Mela of 1906 which as per official records attracted 25 lakh pilgrims. This figure rose to 30 lakh in 1918 and the Ardh Kumbh in between (1912) had a congregation of 20 lakh.

The Kumbh of 1918 was a tame affair because of World War I: Passenger services on railways had been drastically cut and in consequence booking of pilgrims for the Mela was prohibited. By the special efforts of Hindu leaders-who had arranged to hold a Sanatan Dharm conference around the main bathing day-booking was permitted for four days and yet the rush had registered an increase of five lakh over the 1906 figure of 25 lakh.

An equal number of pilgrims (30 lakh) visited the Ardh Kumbh of 1924 even when it posed a serious problem because of the unprecedented behaviour of the Ganga. Instead of joining the Yamuna, as usual, tangentially at a point between Jhusi and Arail, it eroded its right bank, forming dangerous sand cliffs-fifteen feet high in some places-and turned west to meet the Yamuna head on in the vicinity of the Fort.

Prof Permanand who had visited the 1924 Ardh Kumbh records : *Besides, being limited in space the Sangam became dangerous for bathers because of the great depth of the Yamuna at the point. The district authorities forbade bathing at the Sangam and erected strong barricades to bar access to it. The satyagrah offered by a party headed by venerable Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was joined among other prominent citizens by Jawahar Lal Nehru (no great believer in holy baths) who scaled the barricade and took his bath in the Sangam while the rest still squatted on the off side of the barricade.*<sup>5</sup>

About 40 lakh pilgrims gathered for the Kumbh Mela of 1930 as their flow was unrestricted. The river withdrew to the other bank and joined the Yamuna near Jhusi, vacating a wide area for pilgrims. The faithful had a good time enjoying the bliss of the occasion.

The Ardh Kumbh of 1936 with a congregation of 25 lakh was also fairly crowded. Special trains poured out pilgrims till past the middle of the main bathing day. In 1942 during the full Kumbh there was popular uprising against the then British rulers and accidents were averted by restrictions imposed by the crisis in World War II.

The Ardh Kumbh fair of 1948 attracted a gathering of 30 lakhs but was dispersed prematurely due to the outbreak of cholera. The river water was extremely polluted due to seepage from the dumps of night-soil on the sandy ground.

The Kumbh Mela of 1954, the first in free India, was attended by 60 lakh pilgrims. It was planned on a massive scale. Funds were liberally provided for giving amenities and enlightenment to pilgrims, both at the Sangam and on the way. As a precaution against appearance of an epidemic, a certificate of inoculation against cholera was demanded from any person entering Allahabad. This inhibited people, arrivals by rail were below the average of ordinary mela years on the opening days, and the prospect of financial loss led to the withdrawal of the restriction. A heavy rush of pilgrims ensued.

Prof Permanand recounts: *Inadequacy of space for a mela of this size dawned on the authorities on the main bathing day when trains coming to Allahabad, whether regular passenger services or specials, were halted at the point they had reached, since Allahabad could not hold more people than had already arrived.*<sup>6</sup>

Yet there was a stampede in which nearly a 1000 pilgrims were reported dead and many others injured. The management-for reasons into which the Committee of Enquiry

under Chief Justice K K Varma enquired-was unable to regulate the traffic. Immediately below the Bund on the main bathing day hundreds were trampled under feet or perished in the quicksands close by.

Calamity was averted at the 1966 Kumbh by the lucky emergence of a difference among astrologers: some of them ruled that the Kumbh should come off as usual in 1966, twelve years after its predecessor; others ruled that it should be held in 1965. The crowd was divided.<sup>7</sup>

Yet the congregation was estimated at 70 lakh. In preceding Ardh Kumbh it was estimated at 35 lakh in 1960. The 1954 Kumbh tragedy cast its shadow on 1960 Ardh Kumbh apparently.

The Kumbh Mela of 1977 came twelve years after the earlier split Kumbhas of 1965-66. It was widely advertised as a rare event, participation in which could earn untold religious merit. Elaborate arrangements were made for the regulation of traffic and for bathing at the confluence which was luckily duplicated by Mother Ganga flowing in two streams which joined the Yamuna some distance apart.

The Kumbh passed off peacefully. It attracted a record gathering of one crore and had its share of unforeseen natural calamity. Continuous drizzle throughout the main bathing day inundated residential quarters, causing a stampede, which the Railways and other transport agencies found hard to cope with. Struck by the cold and the rain the pilgrims –scantly clad and with hardly a change in reserve-begged piteously for shelter and were forced to take refuge in unspeakable places. Thousands must have perished as a result of the exposure.

This writer was a witness to the inconvenience of the pilgrims from distant places. They were unloaded from buses, trains and had to leave other conveyances on which they came one to one and a half km away from the bathing ghats. Carrying of luggage over this distance was a problem because of porters being available in limited numbers and at high cost.

The actual bathing for the vast majority was a momentary affair. Hundreds fainted on emerging from the ice-cold water and had to be carried to hospitals. Traffic

5. Recent history of Magh Mela by Prof permanent in Journal of Ishwari Prasad Institute of History Vol. 1, Part I July-December 1979 Bank Road, Allahabad. PP. 23 to 32.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

regulation entailed on the bather a circuit of ten to twelve miles in the mela. Sturdy young pilgrims who started from their places of halt in the city in the forenoon are known to have returned late in the evening, around 9 o'clock with a sense of achievement undimmed by any feeling of tiredness.

*'Tradition is certainly more strongly alive in India than elsewhere', notes Dr S.C.Kala, a great musicologist. He says further-*

*It (tradition) has not been affected by political convulsions which occurred from time to time during the course of India's long history. The general pattern of Indian religion and culture remained unchanged in the shifting sands of time. The roots of Kumbh fair are undoubtedly set deep in the darkness of time. Dr Kala records further:*

*The sanctity of bathing at the holy Sangam has been universally acknowledged. About 100 melas are held in Allahabad district at intervals spread over a period of 12 months. Of these the biggest is Magh Mela when lakhs of people take a dip at the Sangam. The most important of all, however, are the Kumbh and Ardh Kumbh.*

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8. Prayag-Brahma's altar of sacrifice by Dr. S C Kala Director, Allababad Museum appearing on Page 1 of Kumbh Mela supplement of Northern India Patrika, Jan. 14, 1977.  
9. Ibid P-1, NIP, Jan, 14, 1977.

## MISUSE OF FACILITIES

**A**s many as 44 of a total of 92 voluntary organisations on which the 1977 Kumbh Mela administration spent Rs. 1,40,000 on providing free facilities and Rs. 50,000 worth 24 acre land for setting up their camps in the Kumbh colony misused the facilities and rendered no service to pilgrims.

This revelation is contained in an official report of the 1977 Kumbh Mela after appraisal of the help rendered to the pilgrims by voluntary organisations. Most of the remaining 48 organisations rendered good service and were given cash awards of Rs. 500 to Rs. 2,000 by the mela administration depending on the quantum of help rendered by them.

The report made clear recommendations about 19 organisations that they should not be given any free facilities for setting up their camps in the Kumbh Mela in future. The organisations named in the report were Akhil Bharatiya Navayuvak Sangh, Akhil Bharatiya Nehru Brigade, Akhil Bharatiya Samaj Sahayak Sangh, Akhil Bharatiya Ayurved Seva Sangh, Antarrashtriya Samajik Karyakarta Sangh, Kesarwani Shiksha Samiti, Godhuli Club, Girija Shankar Bhardwaj Smarak Shiksha Vachanalaya Evam Pustakalaya, Malviya Nagar, Prayag, Guruwar Seva Samiti, Zila Swantantra Sangram Sainik Sangh, Jain Guru Seva Dal, Zila Bharat Sewak Samaj, Zila Ravidas Seva Sangh, Nehru Bal Mandal, Nai Thakur Sabha, Praja Samajvadi Seva Dal, Mahendra Rasayanshala, Mukti Sena Bharatvarsh, Yuva Bharatiya and Sikh Mission.

In the category of those voluntary organisations which had not rendered any help to the pilgrims worth mentioning were Allahabad Homeopathic Medical College, Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, Bharatiya Navyuvak Sangh, Congress Seva Dal, Zila Avam Bis Sutriya Karvaykram, Ganga Putra Ghatiya Sangh, Gandhi Vichar Prachar Samiti, Gandhi Ayurved Vishwavidyalaya. Handia, Jaiswal Seva Sangh, Deo Murari Dharmartha Aushadhalaya, Dhanwantari Seva Sangathan, Nishad Sabha, Prayagwal Sabha, Mahabir Dal, Prayag, Mahanad Mission, Rashtriya Lok Sena, Relief Welfare Ambulance Corpse, Rani Ishwari Devi Memorial Homeopathic Medical College, Jaunpur, Shram Vibhag Scouts, Shiksha Samiti Narharipur, Seven Seas Life Saving Society and Saryuparin Brahmin Seva Dal.

The report makes specific mention of some voluntary organisations which used the camps for '*Kalpavas*' and commercial purpose. The Congress Committee, City and

Zila Mahila Congress Committee, used the camp for 'Kalpavas' and Gruwar Seva Samiti had sold '*desi ghee Halva*'. and had earned Rs. 1,000/- per day.

The report makes special mention of three voluntary organisations-Bharat Seva Dal, Zila Parishad, Bhoole Bhatako Ka Shivir and Mahila Congress for restoring missing persons to their families. The mela administration had to spend Rs. 4,000 on 'lost and found persons.

In view of above irregularities, the Kumbh Mela administration decided to recognise only such voluntary organisations as are registered and allotment of land on the basis of their performances in 1977 Kumbh and 1982 Ardh Kumbh.

Informed sources, however, said that because of political interference three of the voluntary organisations against whom the 1977 Kumbh Mela administration had made recommendations for not giving free facilities were given the facilities in 1982 Ardh Kumbh Mela and this had led to restoration of facilities in 1982 Ardh Kumbh Mela and further led to restoration of facilities to other voluntary organisations as well.

## KUMBH IN 1989

The Kumbh Mela administration could not develop a “Gang Dweep” as had been done in 1977 Kumbh, for bathing ghats to cope with an estimated congregation of about 1.5 crore pilgrims on Mauni Amavasya, the main bathing festival, on February 6, 1989.

All arrangements were directed towards safety of pilgrims flocking to the Sangam from various parts of the country and even abroad. The 1977 Kumbh Fair, as per official estimate, had attracted over 1 crore pilgrims.

The Ganga had been flowing in one main current and the second current besides being very weak left little space between the two streams.

The space available between the two streams of the Ganga was 3000 feet at the Sangam, gradually tapering to 1600 feet at pontoon bridge No. 1 and to about 500 feet at pontoon bridge No. 8. In between the pontoon bridges the space available varied from 400 feet to 2700 feet. This space was insufficient for developing Gang Dweep.

According to Mr J N Dwivedi, officer in charge 1989 Kumbh, of the estimated 1.5 crore pilgrims, 20 lakhs bathed from Arail side and 35 lakhs from the Jhusi side. The rest bathed from the city side. He said that 30 close circuit TV sets were installed at strategic points to monitor inflow of pilgrims and the traffic accordingly regulated.

The life saving work was entrusted to the army along the Yamuna and at the Sangam while police were deployed in rescue operations along the Ganga.

The mela area had been increased by about 400 acres. The total area in 1977 Kumbh was 2,600 acres which had been increased to 3,000 acres.

The PWD had fabricated 553 pontoons of a total of 600 it had to fabricate. The old pontoons available numbered 203. A total of eight pontoon bridges were constructed to link the city side of the mela with the Jhusi side. A bailey bridge was constructed by the army across the Yamuna.

The fair started with Makar Sankranti bathing on January 14, followed by Paush Poornima bathing on January 21, Mauni Amavasya on February 6, Maghi Poornima on February 20. It ended with Maha Shivratri bathing on March 6.

UNI reported from Gorakhpur that ten thousand police personnel were deployed to man the estimated 1.5 crore people in the Kumbh fair, director-general of police, Mr R N Gupta had said there. Mr Gupta had told newsmen that the thrust was on diverting the pilgrims immediately after taking bath to other areas to provide turn to others.

River police and traffic police were strengthened on February 6 to assist the pilgrims on the day of Mauni Amavasya.

## YOGIRAJ DEORAH BABA

Yogiraj Brahmarshi Deoraha Baba was a legendary saint. I had seen him first in 1957 when he came to Allahabad to participate in a Sant Sammelan organised then by the late Shri Narain Mahaprabhu at Sheokuti, on the northern outskirts of the city. It was circulated in pamphlets then that great saint Deoraha Baba, aged 150 years, would deliver religious discourse and I, then an intermediate student, had gone to listen to him.

I distinctly remember his words, *“As one may produce fire by rubbing two pieces of dry wood, one may rub one’s own heart with Ramnam to purify one’s body and enlighten one’s soul, the Supreme god’s representative in one’s body.”*

Laying emphasis on constantly engaging heart and mind in *Ramnam japa*, he said that *ceaseless inner Ramnam japa would create ripples. The moment one is free from work the cycle of Ramnam japa would be resumed automatically.*”

Even later when I visited him on the city side bank of the Ganga in the Magh Mela area where he used to camp on a raised *machan* delivering the same *pravachan* (discourse) for the masses assembled to have his *darshan*.

The quality and content of his *pravachan* differed from man to man. If one is a scholar, knows Sanskrit, he would quote extensively from the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas, Ramayan, Shri Ram Charit Manas, Karmakand *granthas* to substantiate his views, which he always maintained, would be in conformity with the Sanatan Hindu Dharma. He would say people might have any view, but he is free to hold his own without any prejudice to that of others.

Deoraha Baba was held in high esteem by everyone. He had no magic to show as he was a *yogi*. None knew how he spent the night, what he ate, when he answered the call of nature. His best discourses were delivered when he was in a trance. Very often he remained in communion with the Supreme Being. While delivering his discourse he would suddenly stop talking for a few moments and finding no other word for expression he would utter, *‘lahar hai’* (it is a wave), and resumed talking thereafter.

Once I asked Deoraha Baba as to what would be his age and pert came the reply, *“Am I ageing”*. Then he quoted a Sanskrit verse to explain that he remained in communion with the Supreme and evaded a clear reply.

An atheist, he told me, asked him once whether the god or goddess died when his or her image was broken. His reply was in the negative. Just as the soul did not die when it left the body, God also did not die with the image having been broken, he explained.

Similarly, another atheist asked him, what about offerings made to the dead as prescribed in the *Karmakanda* and how it would reach the person who is dead. *The offerings made to the dead, he replied, would reach them just as moneyorders booked from one country are remitted to the addressees in the other country where the foreign currency is converted into the local currency.*

Deoraha Baba was an ocean of knowledge and questions on any aspect of religious practices never went unanswered. One day I asked him why he should give preference to men in high position visiting him over a large number of common people assembled near him for his *darshan*, Deoraha Baba explained that the men in high positions, I was referring to, were either ministers or administrators. Since these people had to administer and were given high positions to serve the public in general, his discourses to them would do public good. Besides, ministers or administrators had limited time and through his discourse he gave them some good advices in public interest. Personally, he was neither interested in any minister nor administrator in particular but he was definitely interested in public welfare and this was why he gave them preference over others.

The then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, suddenly dashed to Allahabad in 1982 Kumbh to seek his blessings. The then Bihar Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra had visited him earlier. Thereafter came the then U.P. Chief Minister Sripathi Mishra and scores of MPs, MLAs and administrators, civil officers that year to seek his blessings. But then his blessings, as he put it, would be in accordance with the actions these people had been performing and his advice always was to serve the public honestly, sincerely and truthfully.

The first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, used to visit him and late Dr Zakir Hussain, President of India, paid him several visits. Recalling his discourse to Dr Zakir Hussain, Deoraha Baba said that he had quoted a Persian couplet which means, “*Man cannot become Khuda (God), but Khuda (God) is not separate (Zuda) from man*” Dr Hussain, he said, was so pleased at this that he used to visit him often.

Replying to a question Deoraha Baba said that whom people considered great as ministers or administrators in his view were very poor persons and needed his help to run the administration, on proper lines. It is the greatness of the soul that makes a man high and material possessions or material attainments were of no consequence to him.

He would often utter: *“Talk of light and forget darkness, talk of truth and forget falsehood and this will give you strength to fight odds in life.*

When I referred to adverse writings about Hindu dharmagranthas, such as beef eating in Vedas, the *Gayatri mantra* containing incorrect usage of grammar, he said he would not contradict, but maintain the view held by the Vedas, *Smritis*, *Puranas*, *Munis* and *Rishis*. The Vedas also were *trigunatmaka* (containing *Sat*, *Raj* and *Tamas* views) and it was better to lay emphasis on the *sat* (pure) qualities and shun the impure ones (*Raj* and *Tamas*).

The *Gayatri Mantra* contained 24 *Varnas* and Balmiki's Ramayan is based on *Gayatri mantra* containing one thousand *slokas* for each of the 24 *varnas*. The *Gayatri Mantra* as such was correct, he maintained, without any prejudice to the views held by others.

The Yogiraj was quite simple in his affirmations when he said *it was better to maintain one's own views than contradicting the views held by others. This equilibrium of mind removed the very cause of strife. He believed that an indomitable courage with unwavering faith in God and discriminating intellect were key to success in life and life after death.*

## SAINT PRABHU DUTT BRAHMACHARI

Saint Prabhu Dutt Brahmachari, founder of Sankirtan Bhawan Nyas Trust at Jhusi in Allahabad, was an institution in himself. Combined in him in abundance were the qualities of a saint, a poet, a writer, a crusader for the Hindu faith and an educationist. He was first jailed in 1921 and was kept in Baharaich, Bareilly, Faizabad and Lucknow jails. In Lucknow jail with him were Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Rajarshi PD Tandon and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. A sanyasi since birth having been influenced by the Vairagya Shatak of Bhatrihari, he had left his home at an early age and was attracted towards the freedom movement. He moved from village to village inciting people against foreign rule when he was jailed in 1921.

When he was freed from jail, he isolated himself in Himalayan caves and observed silence. During this period he remained naked. A strong inner urge to free the nation from foreign rule, however, brought him back to the areas of Bulandshahr, Khurja, and Aligarh, which was his home district, and he joined the freedom movement again. He was jailed in 1931. Thereafter the scene of his activities shifted to Prayag and Kashi. He contributed extensively to newspapers and magazines on current issues. Chandra Shekhar Azad remained in close contact with Brahmachariji, who used to help him.

From 1931 onwards Brahmachariji devoted himself to arousing spiritual and national consciousness and brought out a weekly paper "Yuddhaveer" in which he called upon the people to rise against the British regime. A boat in the Ganga was then his abode. It was raided and the printing materials and machines were seized by the police. He managed to escape and went underground. He again turned towards the Himalayas and went to Samyapras Teerth where Sage Vyas is believed to have written the Mahabharat. He returned to the plains again on advice from the great saints there. He remained at Badrinath for a long time and during the period undertook pilgrimages to Gangotri, Yamunotri and Mansarovar.

Saint Prabhudutt observed complete silence for 40 years, and he did not break it even when he fought an election against Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru as a symbol of protest against the Hindu Code Bill. He broke his silence only in 1967 during the movement which demanded a ban on cow slaughter.

The Brahmachari remained at Hansteerth in Jhusi for six years under a banyan tree observing great *tapasya*. He started a "Sadhana Satra" for six months in 1936 and

great saints of the country, such as Mata Anandmayee, Swami Brahm Prakash, Uriya Baba delivered discourses. This “*Sādhana Satra*” continued for 14 months instead of six months as originally planned for the benefit of the people who had shown keen interest in it.

The Brahmachari initiated Panchkroshi Yatra to trace the Teerthas under it in Prayag with groups of people singing in chorus *akhand sankirtan*. He organised *Akhand Sankirtan* for 13 months in Gorakhpur at the invitation of Hanuman Prasad Poddar. Thereafter, he organised *yagya* at Gaughat and at Triveni Sangam.

The Ramdal in Pratisthanpuri (Jhusi), had not been taken out for over a decade. For its revival in 1948, he organised a movement and was jailed for 22 days. The Ramdal remained stationary for 22 days with *akhand sankirtan* and only after the administration freed the Brahmachari from jail the *dal* moved on.

For 35 or 40 years *akhand* (continuous) *sankirtan* was organised at Sankirtan Bhawan and discourses on the 18 Puranas and Bhagwat were delivered.

He had organised “Bharat Yatra” from Ayodhya to Chitrakoot for a month in 1973 to generate love among the people for the ideals of Bharat. Thereafter he organised Shri Narmada Yatra in 1979 with nearly three hundred people in buses and cars. He has given details about these Yatras in his two books called “Bharat Yatra” and “Narmada Yatra”

Prior to these, he had undertaken Shri Muktinath Yatra in 1964-65 in Nepal and written a book on it. Shri Muktinath is on the bank of the Gandaki river where Jad Bharat Ashram is situated in Nepal.

Even during the period of emergency in 1975-76, he rose against the ordinance which aimed at controlling the temples and mathas in the State and also against demolition of temples on the Triveni Bund in 1977. The ordinance was later withdrawn and the demolition of temples on the bund stopped.

Since 1932 he continued to write books on various religious subjects. He has done commendable work to reach the Bhagawati Katha to the masses by translating it from Sanskrit into Hindi in 118 parts. He has written over 150 books. He wrote books on Ayurved and his daily routine included study and writing books in a boat when he went for a dip from his Ashram to Triveni Sangam for four hours daily.

A visit to the Ashram gives a refreshing change. As an educationist, he had been

running a Sanskrit *pathshala*, which imparts education from *Prathama* to Acharya degrees for 40 years. Every year 50 students are admitted to it. For the past, few years B Ed courses are also being run here.

All the 118 parts of Bhagawati Katha were written by him in his boat and these were sung by 108 scholars in chorus. Saint Deoraha Baba had been instrumental to its sale among his devotees, whom he advised to read it for their spiritual advancement.

Brahmachariji formed a trust which runs the Ashramas in Jhusi, Vrindavan, Delhi and Badrinath.

He felt that a ban on cow slaughter was a must to keep the nation strong and prosperous. He worked to bring about a complete ban on slaughter of cows and calves. On several occasions he freed cows from the clutches of butchers and kept them in his ashram. He launched movements demanding a complete ban on cow slaughter in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Mathura and Patna. He was to a great extent responsible for the partial ban on cow slaughter in several States in the country. He passed into eternity in 1992.

## YOGIRAJ HANDIA BABA

**Y**og occupies a place of great importance in Indian system of revealed knowledge to keep the body and the soul together in pursuit of spiritual advancement. As one goes to a doctor asking him to cure a disease of the body, one should go to a Yogi for the peace of one's mind and heart, says Yogi Shrikant, one of the direct disciples of Handia Baba.

Yogi Shrikant, who practises and preaches the Hath Yog and Rajyog in India and abroad, runs a Handia Baba Yog Shiksha Centre at 2A, Daraganj, Allahabad, and another centre at Vancouver (Canada), and has over the years treated through Yog several ailments and mentally retarded persons. He oscillates between India and Canada to keep his Yog centres running,

Handia Baba lived near the Daraganj burning ghat. His real name was Hridayanand Saraswati, but as he kept and carried an earthen pitcher he was better known as Handia Baba.

There is a Handia Baba Yogalay at the Triveni Bund where his samadhis. He used to stay at this place when the Ganga was in flood in the rainy season. As the water receded he moved to the cremation ground on the bank of the Gangā, living in a hut. He died on February 22 1954 at the age of 104 years. His two disciples, Swami Bhagawatanand Saraswati lives mostly in the Himalayas while Swami Vishnudevanand has been abroad for the past several years teaching Yog. Yogi Shrikant has founded a Handia Baba East-West Children Hospital and Foundation at 2A, Daraganj, to look after children and expecting mothers as a measure of humanitarian service which is akin to service to God as mentioned in the holy scriptures. The Canadian Government and philanthropic people and organisations have helped him in his endeavour.

In reply to a question as to what Yog means, he says perfection in action is Yog. It helps the mind to concentrate with gradual withdrawal of senses from their objects to take it to a blissful state. He says there are some prerequisites for launching upon the Yogic exercises, the foremost being having a routine of life between sleeping and waking hours. One would have to be punctual and regular in the exercises, he asserts.

To a question as to how Yog helps eliminate diseases, Yogi Shrikant says head, stomach and blood circulation cause diseases if not functioning properly. The Yogic exercises help balance the mind, keep the stomach in perfect order and the blood

circulation under control. When these three are regulated, controlled and canalised the body becomes light, fresh, free from ailments and shines.

About *Pranayam* (controlling breathing), he says, in fact, the yogic exercises are based on the breath control system of *pranayam*. One should know how to inhale, when to hold and when to exhale in the process of the Yogic exercises.

He says that while inhaling through left nostrill one should count four, while holding the breadth count sixteen and while exhaling count eight. This system prolongs life span as by this system one saved some cycles of breathing for future life. Tailang Swami lived up to 200 years and Bhola Giri up to 162 years. This was possible because of the Yogic exercises and breath control, he adds.

## ANAND BHAWAN-SWARAJ BHAWAN

The Anand Bhawan-Swaraj Bhawan complex continues to attract lakhs of visitors from across the country and abroad the year round as living monuments of the freedom movement.

Today the city has a number of sprawling bungalows, but as late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi put it, not just the buildings but the activities within them were important. Within the four-walls of Anand Bhawan-Swaraj Bhawan many decisions affecting destiny of the nation were taken.

For pilgrims from the south, the tour of Prayag is incomplete without a visit to this complex. These buildings have for years together been generating in abundance a fund of goodwill for the Nehru family for its sacrifices to the national cause.

The Anand Bhawan-Swaraj Bhawan complex is the property of the Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Fund which has successfully been managing the same since its creation by late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Mr R K Sethi, Administrator of the JLN Memorial Fund, on being contacted said that some 16 lakh people from across the country and abroad visited the complex annually and some one lakh people witnessed the shows in Jawahar Planetarium. The complex opens for the visitors from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

The JLNM Fund Administration, he informed, has arranged sound and light shows on the Nehru family and the freedom movement. Besides, scientific shows in Jawahar Planetarium, there is a picture gallery of all national leaders who had been associated with the freedom movement.

The Anand Bhawan and the Swaraj Bhawan stand majestically in close proximity of the famed Bhardwaj Ashram. This home of the Nehrus gave the country three Prime Ministers-Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

The original Anand Bhawan is known as Swaraj Bhawan, since it was dedicated to the nation by Jawahar Lal Nehru on November 24, 1931 by executing a deed of trust.

Prior to this the Swaraj Bhawan had been handed over to the Indian National Congress by Motilal Nehru, for the freedom movement. This Bhawan was called the Anand Bhawan till 1927, when the family moved to the adjacent, newly-constructed building which was then named Anand Bhawan.

Following in the footsteps of her father, Indira Gandhi also dedicated the Anand Bhawan to the nation in 1970 and gifted it to the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund which has been managing it since.

Indira Gandhi, in her speech at Swaraj Bhawan, while dedicating the Anand Bhawan to the nation said, *“This house is more than a structure of brick and mortar. It has had an intimate relationship with our struggle for freedom. Within the four walls of this house many important decisions have been taken and many important events took place. This house is a living testimony to the memory of those who served their country with all vigour and zeal.”*

*“What is important”, she said, “is not a house or houses, but what happened within them. Swaraj Bhawan is where my father came when he was very small, where he brought his young wife and where I was born. The change of life from the old western affluent living to Gandhiji’s path of service, jail-going, hardships, police searches and people being beaten up, took place here.”*

The previous owner of Swaraj Bhawan was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. The house had been constructed by the British and handed over to him. His descendant Justice Mahmud, sold the house to Motilal Nehru. *It is ironic that a house constructed by the British became the centre of anti-British activities and Justice Mahmud, at one stage, delivered a judgement against the British rule.*

This house shocked the British regime which flourished on the “divide and rule policy”. Since the First War of Independence in 1857 failed, a joint strategy to fight the British was finalised in Anand Bhawan in 1916 by the Congress and Muslim League leaders.

It was in this house that the Indian Home Rule League, U P Branch, was founded in 1917 by Motilal Nehru as its President and Jawaharlal Nehru as its Joint Secretary. The house came under police surveillance and Indira was born the same year. Thus she opened her eyes to the world when the house in which she was born was under police surveillance.

Mahatma Gandhi stayed in Anand Bhawan for the first time in 1919, when he discussed with Motilal Nehru a programme to oppose the Rowlatt Act. In 1920 the All India Central Khilafat Committee met in Anand Bhawan to chalk out a programme to oppose the British designs in India and Turkey.

It was in this house that Mahatma Gandhi addressed a public meeting explaining the non-cooperation movement, after discussing it with Motilal Nehru.

At this stage, Motilal Nehru felt that it was necessary to enter the legislature, to wreck the British rule from within and in 1922 he resigned from the general secretaryship of the Congress and founded the Swaraj Party along with C R Das.

The first distribution of party tickets for the Constituent Assembly took place in this house. It was from this house that the opposition to the Simon Commission was masterminded and executed in Allahabad and Lucknow. All parties had decided to boycott it and a drafting committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru was appointed. This committee met in Anand Bhawan several times to debate and deliberate on constitutional points.

The Congress Working Committee met in 1929 in Anand Bhawan to decide its strategy and declare complete Independence, if the British Government failed to take note of the Nehru report. When the British Government came to terms with the Congress, the Parliamentary Board met here to decide distribution of party tickets. It was here in this house that Nehru and his friends decided to support the candidature of Subhash Chandra Bose for Congress Presidentship.

Other important events that took place in Anand Bhawan include the Congress Working Committee meeting in 1936, Subhash Chandra Bose discussing with Mahatma Gandhi political matters from April 26 to April 30, 1937, Mahatma Gandhi and Maulana Azad discussing political matters in March 1939.

In 1942, C Rajagopalachari came to Anand Bhawan to stay with Jawaharlal Nehru. Sadiq Ali, Dr Syed Mahmud, Acharya J B Kripalani, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr Rajendra Prasad, B Pattabhi Sitaramaiya, J M Sengupta, Vallabh Bhai Patel occasionally came to stay in Anand Bhawan. The first four stayed almost permanently in Anand Bhawan for several years. The Swaraj Bhawan was the headquarters of the AICC till the country won freedom. A Congress dispensary used to be run in the Swaraj Bhawan for child care, education and extra-curricular activities.

## ALLAHABAD MUSEUM

The Allahabad Museum, one of the five national museums of India, is centrally located in the lush green surroundings of the Chandra Shekhar Azad Park.

Founded in 1931 it was initially housed in the precincts of the Allahabad Municipal Building. The foundation stone of the present building was laid in 1947 and the museum shifted to it in 1952. In 1986, the Government of India took upon itself to fund fully the activities of the museum.

The Allahabad Museum is famous for its collection of precious sculptures, terracottas, paintings, coins, epigraphs and the personal collection relating to Jawaharlal Nehru.

The museum also houses a representative collection of prehistoric tools, objects from the Indus Valley Civilization and beautiful beads cut in the shape of animals and birds. The terracotta collection houses more than 6000 specimens from several sites in the Gangetic Valley, principally Kausambi. There are nearly 600 inscribed seals. Among the ancient sculpture collection the most precious exhibit is the Ekmukhi Shivalingam from Khoh (Madhya Pradesh) belonging to the Gupta period (5<sup>th</sup> century AD). The expression of supreme calm and the hint of smile on the lips of Shiv is enchanting.

The stupa of Bharhut, located at 200 km south of Allahabad, flourished in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The remains of the stupa were discovered by the famous archaeologist Alexander Cunningham. Major part of the remains, comprising decorated railings, coping stones and friezes are in the collection of the Indian Museum in Calcutta. The second largest collection is in the Allahabad Museum. The gallery of medieval period sculptures is interesting. The exquisite dancing Yakshis from Jamsote evoke the romance and beauty of the Indian woman.

The terracottas of the Allahabad Museum depict life in ancient times. While the sculptures depict Gods and Goddesses, the terracottas depict common life episodes- hunting and feasting, various styles of jewellery, dresses and coiffures.

The museum has in its possession about 20,000 coins of copper and silver, representing various dynasties and tribes. Besides the gold coins of the Gupta emperors, silver issues of Indo-Greek kings, several rare coins of the Kausambi rulers, zodiac god coins of Jahangir are prize collections of the coin cabinet. The cabinet also holds three gold coins of Roman emperors, Tiberius, in India and are evidence of the ancient trade which flourished between Rome and India in ancient times.

The painting collection includes fine examples of Indo-Persian and Mughal styles, particularly some remarkable miniatures of the reign of Jahangir and Akbar. The Rajasthani miniature collection covers the major styles and so also the excellent corpus of Pahari miniatures. The modern Indian paintings include some of the outstanding work of the Bengal School, the creations of the Russian artists Nicholas and Svetoslav Roerich and the works of Anagarika Govinda, a Buddhist monk of German origin.

The museum has a number of Buddhist tankhas, cloth paintings that are objects of worship. The Decorative Art section has beautiful carvings on wood, ivory, metal and porcelain. The museum also possesses a variety of arms and armours, richly decorated textiles and a large number of gifts donated by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

A popular exhibit in the museum is the pistol which the great revolutionary Chandrashekhar Azad used in his last encounter with the British in the Alfred Park in the vicinity of the museum.

Apart from the various collections, the museum has a well-stocked fully air-conditioned library and a bookshop. The giftshop has a treasure house of figures cast in plaster and fibre glass for sale at very reasonable prices.

## THE BENGAL SCHOOL IN ALLAHABAD

The pioneering art movement, initiated by E.B. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore at the Government Art College (Calcutta) in the beginning of the last century, came to be called the Bengal School. It was a grand venture in nationalistic art, synonymous with the blossoming of a new Indian identity in the movements for political and social reforms in the twenties and thirties. These artists had close association with the city of Allahabad. Interestingly, it was Nicholas Roerich, the famous Russian painter and explorer, who formalized the presence of Bengal School artists in Allahabad. The Russian artist donated a number of his paintings to the Allahabad Museum.

Art lovers and philanthropists in the city felicitated the Russian master by setting up the Roerich Centre for the Arts in the thirties. Under the aegis of the Roerich Centre, a number of monographs and catalogues of the works of Bengal School artists were published in Allahabad. Among the artists so felicitated were Asit Kumar Haldar, Amrita Sher-Gill, Jamini Roy, Sudhir Ranjan Khastgir and Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya.

Comprising over 200 works, Haldar's paintings in the museum include large-size sketches of Bagh Cave frescoes, miniature water colours, temperas and oils. Among the most important paintings on display is a 50-foot long mural of the Bagh Cave frescoes by Asit Haldar. Other important painters of the Bengal School represented in the Museum collection are Rabindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Kshitindra Nath Majumdar, Jamini Roy, Sudhir Ranjan Khastgir and Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya.

## ROERICH GALLERY

**N**icholas Roerich, the Russian artist who painted the Himalayas, came in contact with the artists of the Bengal School in 1930s. His friendship with Jamini Roy and Asit Kumar Haldar enriched the Allahabad Museum.

Initially, he turned westward to the Byzantine painting tradition and Russian church frescoes. But his inner aesthetics compelled him to paint the savage beauty of the Himalayas. He emerged as a painter, explorer, orientalist and seer. Breaking the cocoon of religion and national boundaries, he painted St Sergius, the patron saint of Russia : Buddha, the conqueror; Moses, the prophet and Chintamani, the treasure of the world.

Born on October 10, 1874, in St Petersburg in Russia, in 1924, he left for the vastness of Asia. He travelled through India into Lahul Chinese Turkestan, the Taklamakan Desert, Mongolia and Tibet, braving hazardous conditions.

Roerich responded to the esoteric nature of man. He was drawn by the folklore, penetrating the popular imagination with myths, sacred rites and elemental gods. The Roerich Gallery in Allahabad Museum is a must for the tourist, as it bears ample testimony of the great master's range.

The museum opens on all days except Mondays and Sundays following all 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays and other public holidays. Timings are from 10.15 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. Entry fee is Rs. five for Indian citizens and Rs. 100 for foreigners. Free guided tours are available at fixed hours or on prior information.



Historical Anand Bhawan



The statue of Chandrashekhar Azad situated in Companybagh where he became a martyr



Temple of Justice : Allahabad High Court



Oxford of East : University of Allahabad

## THE HIGH COURT

The High Court of Judicature at Allahabad is now 134-year young. It would be relevant to recall a couplet of poet Akbar, “*Thy justice has won many a heart, not one.*” This High Court has rendered meaningful service to the cause of truth and justice. It has had a historic past, has a shining present and a golden future. One may recall Shakespeare’s lines regarding its members of the bench and bar:

“*To Thine own self be true,  
It must follow as the night and day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*”

This High Court, which has acquired a great name and tradition, has steadfastly followed the definition of justice as defined by a poet in a couplet which reads,

“*It has blessed him  
that gives  
And him that takes.*”

If in the years of yore Purushottam Das Tandon from this bar was the speaker of UP Assembly, this august office is being occupied presently by Mr K N Tripathi of this bar in the UP Assembly.

It has functioned as a balancing wheel of federalism, an equilibrium between fundamental rights and social justice as in the high constitutional concept of the rule of law fundamental rights and the principles of social justice are integrated.

If one recalls the years when Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir Sunder Lal, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Purushottam Das Tandon, Motilal Nehru, Justice Hamidullah Beg, Justice Sir Shah Suleman, Kailash Nath Katju, Bidhubhushan Mullick, Sir P C Banerjee, Pyare Lal Banerjee, Dr Sachchidanand Sinha, Narain Prasad Asthana, K L Mishra, Babu Jagadish Swarup and a host of others one would find the following lines relevant:

“*The grand old masters  
the bards sublime  
whose distant footsteps  
echo through the corridors of time.*”

The deeds of the members of the bench and bar of this High Court have been heroic and good as they have been helpers and friends of the mankind. They were noble-hearted, sympathetic and great-souled men. They were remembered with gratitude and esteem for their wisdom, insight, legal acumen, love for truth and justice through momentous political and social evolution in the country. Most of them moulded the course of history and the achievements have been monumental.

Born of the womb of Sadar Diwani and Sadar Nizamat adalat of the north-west provinces on March 17 in 1866 at Agra this High Court, fourth oldest in the country, has held firmly aloft at the Himalayan heights the lamp of justice amid multifarious social, political and economic tensions and turmoils. It tried its level best to give justice to the people carving out its way through the British policy and aspirations of the masses for freedom. Its bench also produced eminent jurists who adorned the chairs of chief justice in various High Courts in the country, including its predecessors- Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and the Supreme Court and also the Imperial Courts and Federal Court. Its bar has given to the bench eminent judges several of whom have international reputation in understanding of the laws and adherence to justice.

The Allahabad High Court bar produced a galaxy of advocates who moulded the course of political events and guided the destiny of the nation. It gave judges, administrators, public leaders, educationists and produced advocates of international standing.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottam Das Tandon, Sir Sundar Lal, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pt Motilal Nehru, Mr Kailash Nath Katju, Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru were products of the bar of this High Court. Their role in national fight for freedom, in the making of the modern resurgent India need not be over-emphasised.

This High Court is a forerunner in admitting a woman lawyer to its bar while its predecessors Calcutta and later Patna High Court had refused admission of women lawyers the Bar. This was in 1921 on August 24 that this High Court admitted to the bar Miss Cornelia Sorabji as the First woman lawyer of the country. Sir Grindwood Mears was the chief justice of this High Court then.

This was done after the Court in England opened its gate for admission to the bar of women advocates in 1919, but this right of admission was not allowed to the women of this country while an English woman advocate was allowed to practice in Courts in India.

When the High Court for north-western provinces was created at Agra it started with six judges, including the chief justice, and equal number of lawyers. Now the sanctioned strength of the judges is 77 and the number of advocates on the rolls, including its Lucknow bench, runs into over 5,000. It administers justice to the most populous state of Uttar Pradesh earning the distinction of the biggest High Court of the country.

During its 134 years of service this High Court has stood as a rock against arbitrary authority and rule and kept the Government and bureaucracy under its judicial control.

This High Court created sensation when it unseated the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi annulling her election from Rae Bareily Parliamentary constituency on June 12, 1975. This decision moulded the course of politics and a state of emergency was clamped on the country. This Court again gave historic judgements on emergency excesses.

The judges of this High Court have not allowed the scale of justice to tilt to one side or the other. Its judges and advocates have maintained a fine sense of culture, refinement and sobriety combined with integrity, honesty, adherence to truth and justice and the bar through its ability, deep insight into law and vast learning has helped the jury to arrive at sound decisions.

Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya, though having retired from the court life, argued the famous Chauri Chaura case. The presiding judge, chief Justice Sir Greenwood Mears was so impressed by presentation, oratory, fine syntax and diction of his English that he rose thrice from his seat in admiration. He later confided that he did not know what would be the fate of the case but no one else could have argued it better. This was the respect our members of the bar commanded.

This High Court functioned at Agra from 1886 to 1888. It was shifted to Allahabad in 1889 and housed on the Queen's Road (Now Sarojini Naidu Marg) in the existing Accountant General's office premises. The foundation stone of the present High Court building was laid on March 18, 1911 and on November 27, 1917 Lord Chelmsford, Indian Viceroy and Governor General inaugurated the new building for this High Court. On February 21 in 1954 Dr Rajendra Prasad, the President of India, inaugurated a new wing of the High Court.

The Allahabad High Court got its present form with amalgamation of the Chief Court of Avadh on July 26, 1948. Later a bench of the High Court was opened at Lucknow on a pressing demand for it from the Avadh Bar Association.

It may be recalled that Avadh came under the British rule in 1856 when a law commissioner was appointed to administer justice. The first High Court was opened in Calcutta at Fort William with its jurisdiction on the North-West provinces, but Avadh remained out of it. In 1902, the Avadh and North-West provinces under the British rule were amalgamated and christened as United Provinces of Agra and Avadh, but the judicial system for the two continued to work separately.

In 1925 the status of the law commissioner of Avadh was raised to the Chief Judge with four puisne judges to assist him. The Chief court of Avadh was merged into the Allahabad High Court to administer justice to the entire State with its seat at Allahabad soon after the country won independence.

Sir Walter Morgan was the first chief justice of this court while the first Indian chief justice of this Court was Sir Shah Mohd. Suleman. The honour of being the first Indian judge had been bestowed on Syed Mahmood and thereafter on Sir P C Banerjee who served in this capacity from 1887 to 1893.

Among the stalwarts on the bar of this court were Pt. Ayodhya Nath, Sir Sundar Lal, Motilal Nehru, Purushottam Das Tandon, Pt Madan Mohan Malaviya, Kailash Nath Katju, Shah Mohd Suleman, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr Sachchidanand Sinha, Jawahar Lal, Sir P C Banerjee, Pyarelal Banerjee, Babu Jagadish Swarup, Dr Narain Prasad Asthana, K L Mishra in early years and later Shyam Nath Kacker, Shanti Bhushan, Pt. Ambika Prasad Pandey, Mr Vibhav Bhushan Upadhyay and host of others.

The first chief justice of integrated Allahabad High Court was Justice Mullick who was succeeded by Justice O N Mootham, the last English Judge.

When the Law Commission of India was set up two eminent lawyers, one from this High court, Babu Jagadish Swarup, were co-opted members to suggest reforms in the realm of law from the university to the central government level.

The first Indian ICS chief justice was Justice M C Desai who was appointed in February 1961. He had not been a lawyer.

In fact, history of the Bar association of this High Court has been history of the national fight for freedom. It has produced scholars and educationist such as Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya who set up the Banaras Hindu University, worked tirelessly for Hindi and Sanskrit. Purushottam Das Tandon promoted Hindi and worked for it.

In sharp contrast Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru patronised Urdu and Persian and his house after court hours was a place of wit, humour, poetry and literary pursuits.

Thus this High Court through its judges and lawyers in the city helped develop a composite culture of which it is proud of.

This High Court's bar gave the first Prime Minister in Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru, the Home Minister in Dr Kailash Nath Katju and several lawyers and judges to various High Courts in the country and international courts abroad.

An English scholar, Dr Spellman, has observed, "In some respects the judicial system of ancient India was theoretically in advance of the English system of today."

It may be recalled that in 1941 four judges of this High Court proved relevant the Indian Evidence Act in civil and criminal cases. The Supreme Court agreed to this High Court's ruling and its later judgements made it a base for arriving at decisions.

The law is an unending process which should be enriched through pure objectivity, fidelity to truth with proper understanding of the mood, temper, traditional pattern, modern tendencies and challenges as the supreme aim of the law is public welfare. The High Courts should decide relation of man with man, with the State and of the State with the Centre and consider everybody's worth in administering justice. This Court has stood the test of time.

This High Court has been associated with birth of the judicial system, nurtured it with utmost care and built up an enviable tradition earning esteem in the world. Its lawyers and judges have been known for their ability, learning, impartiality, independence and understanding of the law, insight into its intricacies and judicious approach to the emerging issues.

It has worked as judicial bridge between the British rulers and the Indian subjects, it has steered through the post-independence issues of the reorganisation of the States, social tensions between the rich and poor over welfare programmes and policies of the democratic government committed to have socialistic pattern interpreting constitutional issues raised from time to time.

Once Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was pitted against Mohd Ali Jinnah in a case in Hyderabad Court. The Court possessed a document in Persian and wanted the two lawyers to read it out for helping the Court in administration of justice. Mr Jinnah pleaded ignorance of the Persian language while Mr. Sapru read it out fluently. The next day newspapers commented that Maulvi Sapru and Pt Jinnah faced each other in Hyderabad courts.

This High Court has given four presidents of Indian National Congress, Pt. Motilal Nehru, Pt. Malaviya, Mr. P. D. Tandon and Jawahar Lal Nehru, one Prime Minister, several Union and State ministers, chief ministers and Governors, Vice-Chancellors to various Indian universities, educationists par excellence, orators, scholars, law teachers and left its imprint on national scene.

It would be relevant here to recall what Chief Justice Nasirullah Beg had observed in his speech in Urdu at the concluding day centenary celebrations function on November 27, 1996. He had said, 'Every judge should live like a *faqir* and till a judge did not live like *faqir* he would not command respect of the public. He will not get blessings of *Khuda* (God)."

## ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY

**T**he University of Allahabad has completed 113 years of its meaningful existence. It had a hoary past which has degenerated into a deplorable present. It needs a Vice-Chancellor, both educationist and administrator, to turn the deplorable present into a shining future. An internationally reputed scientist, Prof Chunni Lal Kshetrapal as its Vice-Chancellor has been engaged in restoring pristine glory of this university.

We worship the past as we know little about it and are horrified at the present about which we know in details, but we should have the foresight, courage and capacity to build up a bright future and it is here that this university of glorious past had been lacking in during the past two decades.

The glorious past of the university is a written chapter. It is not that this university was ever free from intrigues and infightings. But it had teachers known for their learning and wisdom and they were respected in their respective classrooms. The students of the university were overawed by the personality and stature of the teachers, who combined in them wisdom, learning, morals and deep sympathy for the taught. They helped the poor and the deserving from their own pockets and merit was seldom bypassed to favour their own sons and daughters.

The founder's day celebrations of September 23, 1987 spoke volumes of the present-day affairs in the university which unfortunately should have been in the throes of a crisis in its centenary year. The sense of discipline, camaraderie, good fellowship and cordial teacher-taught relation of the years of yore have now given to rampant indiscipline, both among the teachers and the taught, violence, bombings and shootings and teachers resorting to relay fast for over 90 days at a stretch and agitations for over a month at the beginning of the academic session in the years preceding 1987 hit headlines in local newspapers.

The Allahabad University, the fourth oldest university of the country, during the 113 years has played a significant role in various disciplines of education, such as Arts and Science, medicine and engineering and established a tradition of learning, which, alas, is to be found only in a few of the departments today.

The alumni of this university recall the most distinguished set of professors, such as Dr. Meghnath Saha (Physics), Dr. N.R. Dhar (Physical Chemistry), Prof Dutta (Organic Chemistry), Prof. Bhattacharya (Zoology), Dr. Tara Chand, Dr. Ishwari prasad, Dr. Beni Prasad (History), Prof. Ganga Nath Jha, Prof. K.C. Chattopadhyay (Sanskrit),

Prof. Amar Nath Jha, Prof. S.C. Deb, Prof. S.G. Dunn (English), Sir Safat Ahmad Khan and Dr. R.P.Tripathi (History) and many others.

The alumni also recall the profound scholarship of Prof. Thomson, Prof. S.K.Rudra, Prof. S.C. Jain, Prof. J.K.Mehta (Economics), Prof. Mehta was internationally acclaimed for his “Theory of Wantlessness” and a “Mehta School of Thought” later came into being. Keenly devoted to research, Prof. Mehta was a man of few words but deep learning. Dr. Haribansh Rai Bachchan and Mr. Raghupati Sahai “Firaq” were legends in the university then.

Dr. Dhirendra Verma, Dr. Ram Kumar Verma, (Hindi), Prof. Zamin Ali (Urdu), linguist Hardeo Bahari commanded respect among the students and the teachers alike. Dr. Pyare Lal, Prof. A.C. Banerji, Dr. Gorakh Prasad (Mathematics), Prof. D.R.Bhattacharya (Zoology), Prof. Shriranjan and Prof. D.D. Pant (Botany), Prof. Saligram Bhargava, Dr. K. Mazumdar (Physics), Prof. S. Ghosh and Prof. Satya Prakash (Chemistry) had great attraction for the students during their days at the university.

The Muir Central College, established in 1872, was in fact the forerunner of the University of Allahabad. Then the Muir Central College was affiliated to the Calcutta University. The University of Allahabad came into being as an affiliating university on September 23, 1887. The credit for conceiving a large central college at Allahabad goes to Sir William Muir after whom it was named as Muir Central College.

The scheme for opening the central college was first made public at a public *darbar* of 1868 and its details stressing the need for opening such a college and the university were subsequently explained at another public *darbar* on May 24, 1869.

A meeting of the leading citizens of Allahabad was convened at the residence of the commissioner Mr. Court, where the scheme for the central college and the university was fully explained with immediate encouraging response as a sum of Rs. 16,000 was promised as donation on the spot and to evince his keen interest in the project Sir William Muir donated Rs. 2,000. By 1874 at a sum of Rs. 2,16,993 was raised from the public as subscription, including Rs. 1 Lakh from the Maharaja of Vizianagaram.

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Source: 125 years Post Centenary Silver Jubilee (1866-1991)  
Commemoration Volume I Printed at Maya Press Pvt. Ltd., Allahabad and published by the Allahabad High Court Post Centenary Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume Committee 1991.

The Muir Central College had started functioning from 1872 at Darbhanga Castle which was known then as Lowther Castle. The roll of the arts department was first year class 9, third year class 4 and in 1988, its last year at the Darbhanga castle, the enrolment was first year 27, third year 13, fourth year 26 and M.A. 14. This was, however, excluding the law department enrolment which on December 31, 1872 had 39 students in the English section and 10 in the Urdu section.

The foundation stone of the Muir Central College Building on its present location was laid by Lord North-Brooke on December 9, 1873. The "Pioneer", then published from Allahabad, editorially commented:

“The Muir Central College will be, we are assured, when completed, the finest structure in the North-West provinces, excepting the Taj.”

The Muir Central College Building, designed by eminent English architect Emerson in a modified Saracenic style, was completed in a period of 12 years and it was formally opened on April 8, 1886 by Lord Dufferin. The college has a hall with colonnades, domes and towers, spacious lecture rooms and libraries. It was conceived that architecture might play a great part in education and knowledge, like other powerful influences, when it had a fitting seat and sanctuary.

It was the Muir Central College which before the creation of this affiliating university on September 23, 1887, that during the 16-year period of its existence had become a seat of learning capable of handling over a tradition that was inherited, modified and handed down.

A list of dons of those days, to mention a few, Principal August Harrison, Mr. Gough, who later became principal of the college, Dr. Thibaut. Prof. S.A. Hill, Pt. Aditya Ram Bhattacharya, Homer Sham Cox, makes it amply clear to us the academic atmosphere created and sustained on the college campus.

The college had a debating club which invited eminent leaders and luminaries in various fields to address it and among those invited were Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Sir Abdur Raoof, Sir. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir C.Y. Chintamani, etc. It had a dramatic society. Rajarshi Purushottam Das Tandon once played the Bottom in Shakespear's "A midsummer night's dream" and much earlier Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya acted Shakuntala in Kalidas's play.

Mahatma Gandhi, who later came to be addressed as the father of the nation, had

been invited by the Economics Society to present a paper on “Does economic progress clash with spiritual progress” in December 1916. Prof. Amar Nath Jha took the manuscript from Mahatma Gandhi and kept it as his prized possession till last. This was the first visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Allahabad at a time when he had started looming large on the political scene those days.

The Muir Central College was then affiliated to Calcutta University, Sir William Muir had started correspondence with the Calcutta University about a policy of decentralisation and on September 23, 1887, a year after the opening of the Muir Central College’ Act XVIII incorporating the University was passed. Thus the University of Allahabad was created and like other Universities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and the Punjab it started as a degree-conferring institution. The first entrance test was held in March 1889 at which candidates from Ajmer, Dewas, Rewa, Jabalpur, Patiala, Satna and Jodhpur appeared.

The Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904 and under this Act the territorial limits of Allahabad University were confined to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, the Central Provinces, including Berar, Ajmer-Merwara and the States included were Rajputana and Central Indian Agencies.

There was a sea-change during the period between 1887 and 1927 when as many as 38 different institutions and colleges were affiliated to the university. The present site of the university on the Motilal Nehru Road was chosen in 1909. In 1915 the Banaras Hindu University bill was passed followed by the incorporation of Aligarh Muslim and the university of Lucknow. The Board of High School and Intermediate Education was set up in 1921 and a year later the reorganised university came into being. The establishment of two more universities of Nagpur and Agra completed the process of dismemberment of the University of Allahabad which became a teaching and residential university since 1927.

The University celebrated its Golden Jubilee in 1937, Diamond Jubilee in 1947 and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a special 70th anniversary convocation addressed by late Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on December 21, 1958. It celebrated its centenary in 1987.

The 10 years between the Golden Jubilee and the Diamond Jubilee were the period of great turmoil and agony when the nation fought the liberation struggle vehemently. The university students played their part well taking part in the noncooperation movement, Quit India movement, Civil Disobedience movement as Congress on the

vanguard of the fight had Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan as meeting places of all national leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Vijai Lakshmi Pundit, Krishna Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Deo, Subhas Chandra Bose, Jai Prakash Narain, Sajjad Zaheer, M.R. Masani, Achyut Patvardhan, Chandra Shekhar Azad and several others while students like N.D.Tewari and H N Bahuguna were on the campus. Lal Padmadhar, a promising university student, was shot dead while leading a procession of students, including girls, at the collectorate. This tensed up the university campus.

Chandra Shekhar Azad shot himself dead in the Alfred Park with his last bullet after a fierce fight with British soldiers when surrounded from all sides and this also influenced the student community to a great extent for rebellion against the British rulers.

Despite this turmoil the university remained dynamic, increasing its scope of activity in every field. The total number of students rose from 2056 to 3737 and the number of teachers from 140 to 200. The buildings added to the university during this period were Women' Department (1938) the students union and the Darbhanga Hall (1939), Sarojini Naidu Hostel with accommodation of 64 girls (1939).

The new courses introduced during this period were diploma courses in Music and Painting, addition of Geography as an optional subject for B.A. Examination and Courses for Master of Law Examination. In 1939-40 M Com Degrees, in 1942 M Ed degree and B Sc agricultural Engineering courses were started. In 1944-45 postgraduate courses in Agricultural Botany and Agriculture Zoology were introduced and in 1946 Geography was raised to the level of a postgraduate subject.

The pace of expansion of the university was quick-ended when India attained independence in 1947 and several new departments and buildings were added to the university. To cope with the increasing rush of students the university recognised the CMP Degree College in 1950, Ewing Christian College in 1951 and the Allahabad Degree College in 1956 as its associate college. Thereafter recognition was granted to Rajarshi Tandon Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Arya Kanya Mahavidyalaya and Jagat Taran Girls Degree College as affiliated colleges.

The departments of medicine and engineering were later added to the University. The UGC made a special grant of Rs. 70 lakhs for the occasion. The new library building, the Bachelor teacher flats in Chathan Lines, the NRSC building and the university press were built from out of the anniversary grants.

The Department of Psychology was started in 1961 and its building came up in 1967. It is now a UGC Advance-study centre for the psychological study of social change and development. Another UGC recognised department is ancient history, culture and archaeology. In 1967-68 the J.K. Institute of Applied Physics reoriented its courses on a recommendation of the All India Council of Technical Education. It gives degrees in B.Tech electronics and telecommunication engineering.

There had been no addition of new departments to the university since 1961. It was on the eve of the centenary year when Prof. R.P. Mishra was Vice-Chancellor of the University, the departments of Social Anthropology and Geology and Geophysics were opened and the ground laid for a separate department of computer-science. Also a major building programme was initiated comprising the Indira Gandhi Social Science Complex, Jawahar Lal Nehru Science Complex, and students' hostels, besides acquiring some buildings.

In the pre-centenary year, the objective of reviving the earlier glory of the university was exemplified by organising a number of centenary Lectures, symposia and functions under the auspices of various university departments and Mushaira, Kavi Sammelans, programmes of dance and music under the auspices of the union. The university community enjoyed the programmes and were enlightened by the lectures of various luminaries of various disciplines of education to the full measure.

The Muir Central College and the University were to train, equip and mould the youth of the country to shoulder the responsibilities of life. Its pupils as the time passed by were spread all over the country and abroad filling up learned professions, the public and social services, the world of trade and industry and the spheres of politics and diplomacy. Besides, it was conceived as a centre of research and academic advancement.

Prof. Amar Nath Jha led the university as its Vice Chancellor in 1947, the year India attained independence. A change of spirit possessed the university. The nation had become free but the university atmosphere was disturbed. Proletarian concept became predominant over the liberal ideas and the university students union was changed into a training ground for the political party cadres. 'Demands' were frequently raised on political motivation to gain upper hands, it became difficult for the vice-chancellors to care for academic standards and for teachers to teach in the classes which were crowded disturbing the teacher-taught ratio to a great extent. The political leaders started invading the campus and sought to control its affairs, teachers were engaged

in rivalries and by 1955 the spirit of the university had changed to a great extent succumbing to crowd and sacrificing the standards of teaching and research.

During the period 1923-27 the union elections hardly attracted any attention and were confined to the campus only. Only the most meritorious occupied the chair of the President of the Union. Lectures and debates were the core of the union activities. The university till the period of 1947 was the main nursery for supplying administrators, judges and teachers in the country.

Till 1941 hardly there was a week on the campus without evening engagements. Art exhibitions, cultural shows and lectures formed part of the daily activities in and around the campus in hostels where men of eminence in various disciplines of education were invited to participate.

The first Indian Classical music conference was organised by Prof. D.R. Bhattacharya in the Vizianagaram hall where musicians of all-India repute participated in the session in 1930. The salutary factor was that the teachers had a personal touch with the students and were their friends, philosophers and guide. But is it possible today when the campus has over 30,000 students with limited teachers and limited accommodation?

There was agitation on the campus against the British misrule and tyranny during the fight for freedom, but the window screens were not smashed, the files and records of the university were not burnt, bombs were not exploded and shots were not fired to create an atmospheric of terror for those who wanted to pursue their studies and the university building was not disfigured while these became the order of the day later.

The Union, which organised agitations today, was in the years of yore keen to invite men of eminence for lectures and those who addressed the students through the Union platform included Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu, Abdul Kalam Azad, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Acharya, P.G. Ray, Jadunath Sircar, Mathematician Ganesh Prasad, Geographer Kaushal Kishore, politicians K.N. Katju, H.N. Kunjru, Bipin Chandra Pal, Lajpat Rai, Sir Siwaswami Aiyer, Ali Brothers etc.

The University of Allahabad which had an enviable past has also a bright future. But then it needs an educationist administrator as Vice-Chancellor to plan its development in all spheres free from political interferences. The plan should be decided after an exhaustive discussion on points of development by a group of alumni of this university occupying positions of eminence. A blue print of the plan be circulated all over the

country among the alumini, educationists and political leaders for threadbare discussion to arrive at a consensus for future development of the university.

The residential character of the university has been completely shattered. More hostels both for boys and girls be constructed to retain its residential character and the university be fully equipped to meet the exigencies of the situation in its every department.

The university in Prof. Kshetrapal has the 40<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor during its 113-year life. The following is the list of Vice-Chancellors who adorned the august Chair since 1887:

- 1887 Sir John Edge, Kt. Q.C.
- 1894 T.Conlan, Esq., C.I.E.
- 1898 Mr. Justice R.S.Aikman, LL.D.
- 1900 Justice Sir George Knox, Kt. LL.D.
- 1906 Pandit Sundar Lal, LL.D., C.I.E.
- 1908 Sir Robert Aikman, LL.D.
- 1909 Sir Henry George Richards, Kt., K.C.
- 1912 Sir Sunder Lal, LL.D., C.I.E.
- 1917 Sir Pramada Charan Banerji, B.A., LL.D.
- 1919 Sir Theodore Caro Piggott.
- 1920 Mr. Justice Gokul Prasad, M.A., LL.B.
- 1922 Sir Claude de la Fosse, M.A.D.Litt. C.I.E.
- 1923 Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Ganganath Jha, M.A., D.Litt., LL.D.
- 1932 Pandit Iqbal Narain Gurtu, M.A., LL.B.
- 1938 Dr. Amaranatha Jha, M.A., D.Litt., F.R.S.L.
- 1947 Dr. Tara Chand, M.A.D.Phil.
- 1949 Dr. Dakshina Ranjan Bhattacharya, M.SC., Ph.D.
- 1952 Professor Amulya Chandra Banerji, M.A.
- 1955 Shri B.N.Jha, B.Ed. (Edn.)
- 1957 Dr. Shri Ranjan, D.Sc., F.N.I.
- 1961 Justice P.K.Kaul
- 1961 Dr.Balbhadra Prasad
- 1965 Mr.R.K.Nehru

1968 Prof.A.B.Lal  
1971 Dr.C.M.Bhatia  
1972 Prof.Babu Ram Saxena  
1973 Mr.Ram Sahai  
1976 Dr. P.D. Hajela  
1979 Prof.Adya Prasad  
1980 Prof.U.N.Singh  
1983 Prof.G.C.Pande  
1984 Dr. R.P.Mishra  
1987 Prof. Wahid Mullick  
1992 Prof. R.C. Mehrotra  
1994 Prof. U.N.Gupta  
1994 Prof. S.C.Gupta  
1997 Prof. Jagadish Prakash  
1997 Prof. V.D.Gupta  
1998 Prof. H.P.Tiwari  
1999 Prof. Chunni Lal Kshetrapal

#### LIST OF DISTINGUISHED FORMER STUDENTS OF ALLAHABAD UNIVERSITY IN CIVIL SERVICES:

1. Shri T.N.Kaul I.F.S.(Retd.)
2. Sri Jagat Mehta I.F.S.(Retd.)
3. Sri P.N.Haksar, I.F.S.(Retd.)
4. Mr. Govind Narain I.C.S.
5. MR. T.N.Chaturvedi, I.C.S.Auditor General
6. Mr. Dharamvira I.C.S.(Retd.)
7. Mr. P.K.Kaul, I.A.S., Cabinet Secretary

#### POLITICIAN AND STATESMEN

1. Late Pt.Madan Mohan Malviya
2. Prof. Nurul Hasan
3. Late Pt. G.B.Pant

4. Mr.V.N.P.Singh
5. Mr. H.N.Bahuguna
6. Mr. Chandra Shekhar
7. Mr.N.D.Tewari
8. Sri Arjun Singh
9. Mr.Ram Niwas Mirdha

#### JUDGES SUPREME COURT

1. Mr.Justice K.N.Wanchoo, I.C.S.(Retd.)
2. Justice R.S.Pathak
3. Justice Ranganatha Mishra
4. Justice K.N.Singh

#### SCIENTISTS

1. Dr. D.S.Kothari
2. Dr. B.D. Nagchaudhary
3. Prof. Rajendra Singh
4. Dr. M.M.Joshi

#### LITERATURES

1. Haribansh Rai Bachchan
2. Mahadevi Verma
3. Dr. Ram Kumar Verma
4. Dr. Bhagwati Charan Verma
5. Dr. Jagadish Gupta
6. Dr. Dhirendra Verma
7. Dr. Hardeo Bahari

#### ACADEMICIANS

1. Dr. Ishwari Prasad
2. Dr. R.P.Tripathi
3. Prof. Amar Nath Jha

## JOURNALISTS

1. Janardan Thakur
2. S.Sahai
3. Sudhir Dar
4. Ranganatha

## SPORTSMEN

1. T.N.Seth
2. Suresh Goel
3. Damyanti Tambe (Nee) Subedar
4. Wahid Nazir Usmani

## INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad, is structured on the radical objective of developing professional expertise and skilled man-power in IT related spheres to enable the country to explore effectively the emerging opportunities. This would help meet the economic challenges generated by the ongoing global Information revolution, which has affected virtually every area of developmental and social activity. As an apex institution in the area of information technology, the IIIT Allahabad is the first step towards acquiring the indigenous capability necessary for profitably exploiting and harnessing the multi-dimensional technology at all levels and attaining the expertise to emerge as a leading player in the global arena.

The IIIT, Allahabad, established on August 12, 1999 is the first in a proposed chain of “front-ranking IT centers of excellence” to be established in different parts of the country by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The setting up of such a centre has been recommended by the National Task Force on “Information Technology and Software Development” with a view to addressing the urgent need for massive IT-related manpower generation. The enormity of the task may be gauged from the fact that while the projected cumulative manpower requirement in the coming two years is 1.5 lakh personnel, the existing institutions in the country-including the IITs have a capacity of producing only 60,000 trained personnel per year.

It is in this context that institutes like IIIT, Allahabad stand to play a crucial role. For, unless the growing requirement for high level technical manpower is met on a priority basis achieving national goals in critical areas like defence, weather forecasting, space programmes, economic development and social transformation will suffer immeasurably, not to mention the Indian IT sector’s prospects in the international sphere.

As an institution structured to nurture excellence, the driving spirit of the IIIT, Allahabad, is an uncompromising commitment to quality. Accordingly, the courses offered are so designed as to match the best IT courses anywhere in the world.

The thrust areas are: innovative research and development, expert consultancy for industrial development and growth, primarily in the domestic context, and counselling and guidance for industry institute linkages and networking at the national and international levels. In pursuing the agenda for excellence that it has set for itself, the IIIT, Allahabad, also strives to set the pace for the other similar institutes to be

established later by ensuring that the facilities and learning environment it provides, are the best obtainable in the country.

The Institute is using the latest generation information technology for administrative operations, fully utilizing the benefits through the Internet, Intranet and Extranet.

To supplement its resource inputs, the IIIT Allahabad, is networking with other institutes in the region like the IIT, Kanpur, the Banaras Hindu University and the Universities of Gorakhpur and Lucknow, as also other national and international institutes.

The Institute has drawn up a very strong research programme in a few select areas, as it feels that it will be better to focus on a few vital areas and build up human resources and research facilities, than spread resources thinly over a large-cross-section of areas. The emphasis in this regard is on developmental activities, maintenance and implementation activities and delivery of knowledge based products and services and related business and consultancies. For the first time in the country, the institute has adopted a multi-entry and exit model for admissions and passing out at different levels. This allows candidates with different academic/industrial backgrounds to enter at appropriate levels as per their educational qualifications and exit as per choice after getting a certificate, diploma or degree.

The existing programmes of the institute have been so designed as to meet the IT requirement of the following groups:-

- Government or similar institutions within the country.
- Private corporations and non-governmental organisations, as also self-employment in the domestic industry.
- Global hardware and software industry.
- Business opportunities in other less-explored areas.

A student can enter after 10+2 or a later stage and, in due course, acquire a certificate, diploma or degree within the Indian and international system of education.

In the sphere of research and development, the focus is on the following areas:

- Artificial intelligence.
- Automatic translation from one Indian language to another or to English.
- Bio-Chips.

- Fibre-Optic Communications.
- Database systems for water, sanitation, health and agriculture.
- Development and organisation of legal knowledge.
- Fuzzy systems.
- Legal informatics (commercial, educational, governmental, administrative)
- Natural language processing.
- Nanotechnology.
- Neurocomputing.
- Neuro-Fuzzy systems
- Quantum computing.
- Robotics.
- Speech recognition.
- Visual perception.

Efforts are on to persuade industry leaders SUN, Microsoft, IBM Silicon Graphics, Motorola, Intel etc – to set up advance state of the art laboratories at the institute. This apart, the institute will be setting up its own R & D laboratories to develop diverse applications. Recently, SUN Micro systems has donated Rs. 70.00 lakh for sophisticated equipments of the Institute.

## GEOMAGNETIC RESEARCH LABORATORY

The Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG) has established a Regional Center, Geomagnetic Research Laboratory (GRL) at Jhusi in Allahabad, Prof Murali Manohar Joshi, Minister of Human Resource Development, Department of Ocean Development, Science and Technology, laid the Foundation Stone of this Centre at a ceremony organised by IIG at the site in Jhusi on 21<sup>st</sup> May in 1999. Prof. V S Ramamurthy, Secretary, Department of Science and Technology and other dignitaries together with members from IIG, DST, MRI and Allahabad University attended the function.

IIG is a premier, autonomous, research organisation under the Department of Science and Technology with its headquarters in Mumbai and has been involved in magnetic studies for over 150 years. Today, IIG operates a network of 10 geomagnetic observatories from the southern tip of the country up to Gulmarg in the north, and has also been making systematic magnetic measurements at Antarctica (since 1982). Allahabad fills a vital gap both in latitude and longitude for establishing the temporal and spatial structure of geomagnetic source fields.

Geomagnetism is a multi disciplinary area of research, which encompasses the study of the earth's interior and the dynamics of the upper atmosphere as geomagnetic source fields lie both within the solid earth, and in external currents flowing in the ionosphere and magnetosphere. Ground measurements contain signatures from all these sources. IIG has vigorous research programmes in both Upper Atmospheric Sciences and Solid Earth Geomagnetism. Its GRI centre at Allahabad is a centre of advance research and will focus mainly on the Solid Earth Geomagnetic Programme.

The activities of the GRL, Allahabad includes techniques of magnetovariational and magnetotelluric methods for imaging the deeper structures of the Himalayan and Indo-Gangetic Plains. Earlier studies have established close connection between electrical structures and high seismicity zones. Further magnetization and electrical properties of rocks undergo change due to stress associated with impending earthquakes. Geomagnetic and geoelectrical precursors can play pivotal role in earthquake prediction programmes.

The Allahabad Centre has plans to establish Paleomagnetic Laboratory for studies of magnetic fields in the distant past and a laboratory for magnetic Petrology (rock studies). These will help develop tectonic evolution models. The characterisation of

physical properties of rocks at high temp-pressure is important to validate structural models developed from surface observations. The GRL Center proposes to have intensive collaborative programmes with Allahabad University in the field of high temperature, high-pressure research.

Although GRL'S main emphasis will be Solid Earth Geomagnetism, nevertheless, taking advantage of its location a number of Upper Atmospheric Research Programmes are also being included. It has been proposed to install Partial Reflection Radar, All Sky Camera, and Ionosonde, VHF Scintillation Network and other experiments to understand the intricacies and dynamics of the Upper Atmosphere.

This GRL Allahabad has state of art Digital Magnetic Observatory and is being networked with headquarters at Mumbai and the other regional centre at Tirunelveli. The infrastructural facilities of the GRL center, such as state of art electronic laboratory and workshop would also be extended to other academic and research organisations present in the close neighbourhood. The GRL centre plans to have several collaborative programmes with Mehta Research Institute (MRI) and Allahabad University.

Allahabad University has produced several pioneers in different disciplines. With the establishment of MRI, Institute of Social Sciences, and the upcoming Geomagnetic Research Laboratory, it is hoped that Allahabad will become a very important national centre in academics and research.

## **MOTILAL NEHRU REGIONAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE**

**M**otilal Nehru Regional Engineering College (MNREC), Allahabad, is one of the premier institutions imparting technical and management education.

Set up in 1961, MNREC admits students from all States and Union Territories of the country, primarily aiming to foster national integration and brotherhood. With a modest beginning the college today has grown by leaps and bounds and is recognised today as one of the leading technical Institutes of the country.

MNREC offers undergraduate programmes in six streams of engineering, postgraduate programme in thirteen streams of engineering, computer applications and management studies. Quality Improvement programme is also being offered for faculty members of other engineering colleges and institutes for ME/Ph.D. degree.

The College also runs a special coaching centre for SC/ST candidates to prepare them for Engineering services. Non-formal and continuing education programmes are also offered to the advantage of engineers in service. Conferences, seminars and curriculum development workshops are held on a regular basis.

The reputation of an institution is best indicated by its infrastructural facilities, job-opportunities for students, academic profile of faculty, research and consultancy offered and the annual budget. The past trends indicate employment for final year students through campus interviews to be in range of 90-95 per cent with the rest opting for higher studies. Jobs in various multi-national and public sector companies are offered to students. The college has highly qualified academic staff with more than 90 per cent of the faculty members being post-graduate and 65 per cent holding Doctorate degrees. It is fully residential with six hostels for boys and two for girls. Campus residential accommodation is available for all the faculty members and most of the staff.

The design centre established under Indo-UK\_REC Project is equipped with facilities in the area of CAD/CAM, Robotics, Image Processing, Environmental Engineering Structures, Electronic Circuit Design etc. This centre runs courses in collaboration with private and public sector organisations in the field of Software and Information Technology.

An air-conditioned extension of library, multipurpose gymnasium and Seminar Hall are recent additions to MNREC infrastructure. A Nodal Centre of National Technical

Manpower Information Systems (NTMIS) has been established in the college. This centre is engaged in collection of data regarding technical manpower being produced in the State of Uttar Pradesh, their employment potential and job profile. The focus is now on institute-industry partnerships, entrepreneurship development, Computer networking, internet and E-mail facilities, modernisation of library of "Learning Resource Centre" (equipped with CD-ROM, Video etc.).

There are proposals to introduce two new U.G. courses, in Information Technology and Chemical Engineering/Bio-technology. Besides, four new P.G. courses in water resource management, Environment Geotechnology, Software engineering and Material Science are under active consideration of AICTE and are likely to be introduced soon. MNREC aims at developing and nurturing world class high quality technical and managerial manpower to serve the nation and the humanity.

## ANTIQUITY OF ALLAHABAD

Evidences of the existence of some of the largest cities of ancient time along the mid-Ganga some time in 2500 BC around Allahabad –Kausambi, 65 km, Jhusi, 8 km, Sringverpur, 31 km, and Bhita, 40 km- have been found. This indicates a rich social-cultural heritage of the Vedic city of Prayag, extending possibly to China.

A study by Dr Sunil Gupta, curatorial associate of Allahabad Museum, says that the earliest evidence of rice cultivation in India comes from the site of Koldihawa, in 800 before present (BP). (He explained, this is the latest international standard for dates, from which if 2,000 (the AD years till now) is subtracted, it would give the corresponding BC date).

Koldihawa is about 100 km. south of Allahabad, the focal point of the mid-Ganga civilisation.

Dr. Gupta has pointed out that after domesticating rice agrarian society emerged, which created surplus, leading to the formation of the first towns and cities around 2,500 BC in India, 6,500 years after the domestication of rice. Some of the largest cities of the ancient time, along the mid-Ganga, like, Kausambi, Jhusi, Shringverpur and Bhita were around Allahabad.

The Environment and Civilisation Global Programme (ECGP) at the International Research Centre of Japanese Studies (IRCJS), Kyoto is currently studying the comparative processes of the Indo-Chinese (Ganga and Yangtze river civilisations, according to Dr. Gupta who recently returned from Kyoto, Japan, where he was a part of the ECGP, as a resource person of the mid-Ganga Valley Civilisation from India.

Dr. Gupta is the first Indian archaeologist who went to Yunnan in China (near Assam on the Chinese side) along with Prof. Yoshinori Yasuda, the Japanese director of the ECGP to document, first hand, the common factors that led to the development of the two ancient river civilisations.

The aim of the tripartite study team (Japan-China-India) has been to understand the basic process of the rise of civilisation and devise a model, on the basis of this comparative study, which would help understand newer river civilisations of the world. The collaborative interest in the multidisciplinary project is because both the places manifest two major processes. First, the domestication of rice and secondly, the emergence of urbanisation which followed.

In the Yangtze River Civilisation, Prof. Yasuda discovered evidence of rice domestication, going back to 12,000 BC, which is about 2,000 years before the mid-Ganga rice cultivation. The parallels are interesting. The surplus of the agricultural economy in the Yangtze River also led to the creation of early towns and cities 5,000 years after the rice domestication. A model of civilisation processes emerged from it, he said.

The tripartite study team also pursued the long distance-contact between the Indo-Chinese river civilisation. In October 1999, Prof. Yasuda, who is heading the Japan-China expedition, went to Yunnan, along with Dr Gupta. The joint expedition undertook palynological (study of pollens in deep sediments and recreation of the palyo-climatic conditions of the ancient era) and archaeological survey, around Er Hui Lake, in western Yunnan. Earlier, in February 1999, Prof. Yasuda and Dr. Gupta visited places near Allahabad for a similar study. The Japanese director is scheduled to visit India again, he informed.

A number of archaeological indications of Yangtze valley's contact with the Ganga valley was found. For example, the etched cornelian beads (red stone) are similar to the types found in Kausambi. Similarly, images of Bodhisattva found in Upper Yangtze bears close resemblance with the Ganga valley artefacts.

He added, Chinese archaeologists are also keen to discover the contacts between China and India. He mentioned about the Chinese archaeologist, Dr. Xiao Minghua, Chief of the Yunnan Cultural Relics and Archaeological Institute, Kunming, in particular, and his deep interest. Dr. Gupta and Dr. Minghua attempt to undertake a holistic approach toward the comparative and contact study project of the Yangtze and Ganga valleys in which Allahabad is playing a central role.

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As told by Dr Gupta to Mr Arindam Roy, the writer's colleague earlier working for the Times of India, Lucknow Edition, in Allahabad).

## THE RISE AND FALL OF NEWSPAPERS IN ALLAHABAD

*Mortality is a very well known fact of life but I think it is not very well realised that in newspaper, in fact, mortality rate is much higher.*

This brief is a part of address by late Pt. Motilal Nehru delivered on October 20, 1929 on the occasion of the opening of the new building of the erstwhile, 'The Leader' as the first Chairman of its Board of Directors.

How true Motilal's observation was! The Urdu weekly 'Swarajya', whose eight editors were awarded imprisonment and jailed at 'Kalapani', the 'Chand' which published its famed '*Phansi Issue*' (about the patriots who were hanged), the Abhyudaya Hindi daily, the Amrit Bazar Patrika, Amrit Patrika, Prayag Patrika, Deshdoot, Newslead, among dailies, are no more. These covered a period from 1887 to the present day.

In 1960-64, the Leader's editor late Rameshwar Nath Jutshi did not allow the use of word 'rape' to appear in it. Stories relating to incestism ones were strictly forbidden during his time. In fact, he even issued orders to the desk asking them to be extra-cautious while dealing with such issues. His view was that one single newspaper was read in the family by father, mother, sons and daughters and as such even true stories which pricked the conscience of the readers and became an ugly quote for the future generation in similar situations be not allowed to appear in the newspaper he edited. He had, however, allowed expressions, such as 'modesty outraged' or 'criminally assaulted' to serve the purpose.

The rise and fall of periodicals and newspapers may be traced to 'Hindi Pradeep' (1887) which closed down in 1910 due to draconian Vernacular Press Act. Pt. Balkrishna Bhatt was its founder editor who aroused the masses against the British misrule and feelings of self-respect, patriotism, sacrifice among the readers of Hindi Pradeep.

In 1900 the Indian Press brought out the famed 'Saraswati'. It closed down in 1920.

Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya started "Abhyudaya" Hindi daily in 1907 and the same year Bharat Mata Society of Lahore brought out Swarajya Urdu Weekly. Abhyudaya lived for 40 years producing editors like Rajarshi Purushottam Das Tandon, Satyanand Joshi, Thakur Surayakumar Verma, Krishna Kant Malaviya, Padmakant Malaviya etc.

Swarajya closed down in 1910. Its 75 issues were published during the period. Every

time an editor was punished and jailed the paper carried an advertisement which read:

*'Swarajya needs an editor of the calibre who would be paid as wages only two dried breads, a glass of water and imprisonment for at least 10 years for every editorial written for the paper.*

Yet there was no dearth of applicants for the post. Such was the prestige of the editors then. Four editors of Swarajya-Motilal Verma, Baburam Hari, Nand Gopal and Laddaram Kapoor-were sentenced for imprisonment at *Kalapani* and sent to Port Blair to undergo the ordeal in solitary separate cells there. All of its eight editors were awarded imprisonment for a total period of 125 years, a world record.

'Chand' brought out by Ramrakh Singh Sehgal was started in 1920. It too closed down later. Its two issues '*Phansi issue*' and '*Marwadi issue*' were very popular.

'The Leader' was launched on October 24, 1909, on the auspicious Vijay Dashami Day, by Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. It soon became the authentic voice of liberal opinion. Those were the stirring times. The cry of Swarajya had reached a deafening crescendo and so had the political aspirations of the people demanding democratic expression. Under the editorial leadership of C Y Chintamani, who was a leader of opinion in his own right, 'The Leader' rapidly grew in esteem and prestige as one of the leading dailies of the land.

The first chairman of the Board of Directors of 'The Leader,' Pt. Motilal Nehru, said, *'It is not a common occurrence, ladies and gentlemen, in India to see a newspaper service struggle in its infancy. In our life, in fact, mortality is very well known, but I think it is not very well realised that in the newspaper, in fact, mortality is much higher (laughter).*

*Apart from the usual causes, such as lack of numbers, which, of course, are common to human beings as well as to newspapers is liable even at this advanced stage of civilisation to a practice, which is happily put an end to in the case of human infants- I mean the practice of infanticide (renewed laughter), we see year by year a number of these innocents slaughtered and it is, therefore, no mean achievement for 'The Leader' to have survived all those adversities.*

Admittedly, a professionally moderate paper today, it was in those days considered to be the organ of the extremists and certainly it was not a *person non grata* with

the powers that be. It, therefore, has survived all rebounds to its credit and to its tenacity for life and service to the country.

*The connection with the paper is a very peculiar one without detecting from anything that has been said about the real founder, my friend, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, I think that I may claim to be the natural father of 'The Leader', Pandit Malviya, every body conceded it (laughter).*

Then Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya had declared, '*The Leader shall never die.*' And with this determination Mahamana sold out even the preserved ornaments of his wife to distribute the wages of 'The Leader' employees but refused to allow it to die and perish.

Mahamana transferred the financial control of 'The Leader' to Birlas in 1945 with a firm faith that they will keep their promise to run the paper as trustees. Yet 'The Leader' was closed down on September 6, 1967.

It may be recalled that Gandhiji had acclaimed 'The Leader' as one of the best edited Indian dailies', and Dr Rajendra Prasad called it a 'national institution'.

Long back when once, 'The Leader' was accused by the British of 'seditious activities, Gopal Krishna Gokhale intervened with the higher authorities to save 'The Leader'.

In 1911, when the end of the enterprise was definitely foretold and even a date was fixed for the obsequies the Mahamana knew only one slogan to utter, '*The Leader shall not die*'. His call brought Raja Motichand, Rai Krishnaji, Babu Govind Das, Babu Gauri Shankar, Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji, Dr. Kailash Nath Katju, Dr. Narayan Prasad Asthana and others to the rescue of 'The Leader' in the hour of its great crisis and Malaviyaji's faith triumphed.

It was on June 12, 1909 that the memorandum of association of the Newpapers Ltd. for the publication of 'The Leader' was signed by Pt. MadanMohan Malaviya. Pt. Motilal Nehru, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Munshi Ishwar Saran, Pt. Baldev Ram Dave, Rai Braj Narain Gurtu and Lala Ram Charan Das and among others the notable personalities associated with the paper, were Dr. Sachchidanand Sinha, whose 'Indian People' was incorporated in 'The Leader' and Raja Motichand of Varanasi who gave his invaluable support at a critical juncture in the life of the paper.

'The Leader' received blessings from no less a person than Gopal Krishna Gokhale on its birth.

It would not be out of place to mention that the shares of the company were held by great people like Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Mrs Kamla Nehru, Dr. K N Katju, Dr. H N Kunjru, P D Sapru, S N Kakkar, G N Kunjru, Padampat Singhania, Rai Amarnath Agarwal, Dr. Ram Charan Agarwal, Maharaja of Darbhanga and others.

The death of 'The Leader' was mourned by leading national dailies with the headlines like the shame and sorrow (National Herald), Death of a paper 'Statesman', 'Martyrs Memorial' (Navbharat Times). He sold his wife's ornaments for the Leader (Janayug).

## SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF CATHOLICS

The Church in Allahabad has played significant role in improving the quality of life in and around the city. Working side by side the Hindus and Muslims, the Christian missionaries have rendered yeoman's service in the field of education, social service, including attending to people in distress and organising relief work for the victims of natural calamities.

The Christians are a minority in Allahabad, but they have undertaken major projects of social, cultural, architectural, educational uplift. Father Dheeranand Bhatt has been the live wire in recent times of amity and goodwill among all sections of the people.

The city has two Cathedrals, the All Saint's Cathedral of the Protestants and the Roman Catholic Cathedral, both in the Civil Lines area. While the Protestants come under the Lucknow diocese, the Roman Catholics are included in the Allahabad diocese. The two bishops have their headquarters in the city.

The All Saint's Cathedral is a structure of whitish sandstone a modified Norman church structure, considered to be one of the finest. This Cathedral which is of national importance, was designed by the British architect, Sir William Emerson, in 1871, nearly three decades before he designed the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta.

This fine example of Gothic architecture dominates the landscape with its spires, turrets, flying windows and stained glass windows imported from Argentina and supported by red and white stones. It is situated near the Allahabad railway station at the crossing of Mahatma Gandhi Marg and Sarojini Naidu Marg.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral was constructed in 1879 and dedicated to Saint Joseph. It is located on Thornhill Road. In 1905 a clock was installed and in 1929 it was provided with a pneumatic organ, the first of its kind to be brought into India, alongwith the artistic bishop's throne and monumental statues which decorate its facade. The finishing touch was given in 1940, with paintings and decorations. The bishop's house was erected in 1894.

Christ Church, near Naqvi Park, has windows embellished with original stained glass from Belgium. The Bible stand here which is in the form of an eagle, weighs a hundred kilos. Established for the French garrison, it has its headquarters in Salisbury, England.

The Church of North India of the protestants and the Roman Catholic Church have

both been instrumental to the growth of education and social services. The Church of North India runs a chain of educational institutions, such as, the Ewing Christian college, the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, Naini, the Mary Wanamaker College, the Girls High School, the Boys High School and the Bishop Johnson High School. These are prestigious institutions where it is difficult to get admission because of the surfeit of applications.

The Roman Catholic institutions are the St. Mary's Convent, St. Anthony Convent, St. Joseph's College, Bethany Convent in Naini and the Nazareth Hospital and Gigyasu Kendra, meant for exchange of views on literature, religion and other allied subjects with a cross section of society.

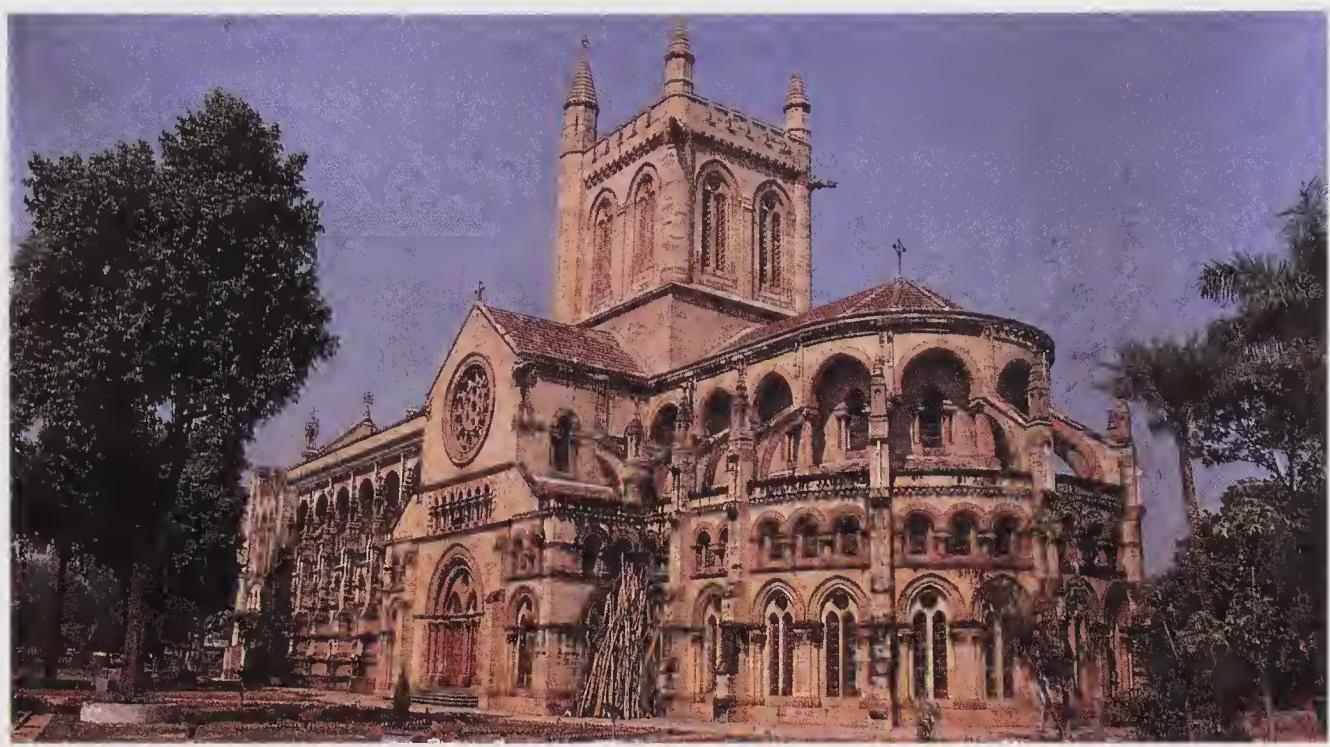
St. Joseph's seminary holds a place of pride among the Catholic institutions. The earliest reference to St. Joseph's collegiate is traced to January 15, 1885. It was initially a primary school and was later upgraded as a middle school in 1887. The well-known linguist; Fr. Camil Bulke, is a product of St. Joseph's seminary.

Though Catholics are comparatively less in number, the Catholic church in Allahabad has played a significant role in improving people's lives, by imparting education.

Records show that the city was first visited by Dr. Matheus de Castro, vicar apostolic of the Mughal-Tibetan Mission, in 1669. His visit was followed by Portuguese missionaries, mostly Jesuits, under the protection of Akbar the Great.

The Mission of Allahabad was established by Fr. Felix of Turin, who became the chaplain of the city in 1858. Dr. Pal Tosi, the bishop, transferred the headquarters from Patna to Allahabad, as Allahabad, being the capital of the North West Provinces then, was a more suitable place of work.

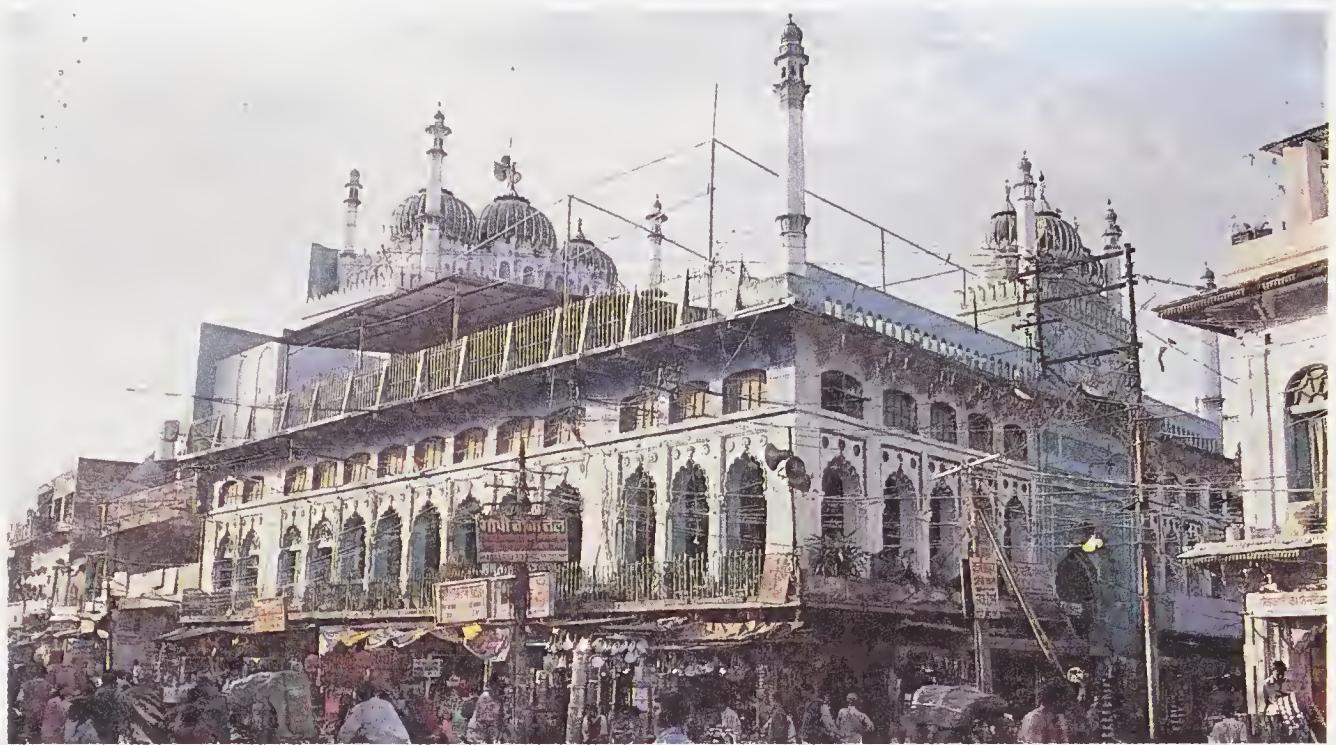
The Church in Allahabad has changed its emphasis to participation with various communities in their moments of joy and sorrow and the emphasis today is on a better understanding among different faiths, for peaceful co-existence and participation in the national mainstream.



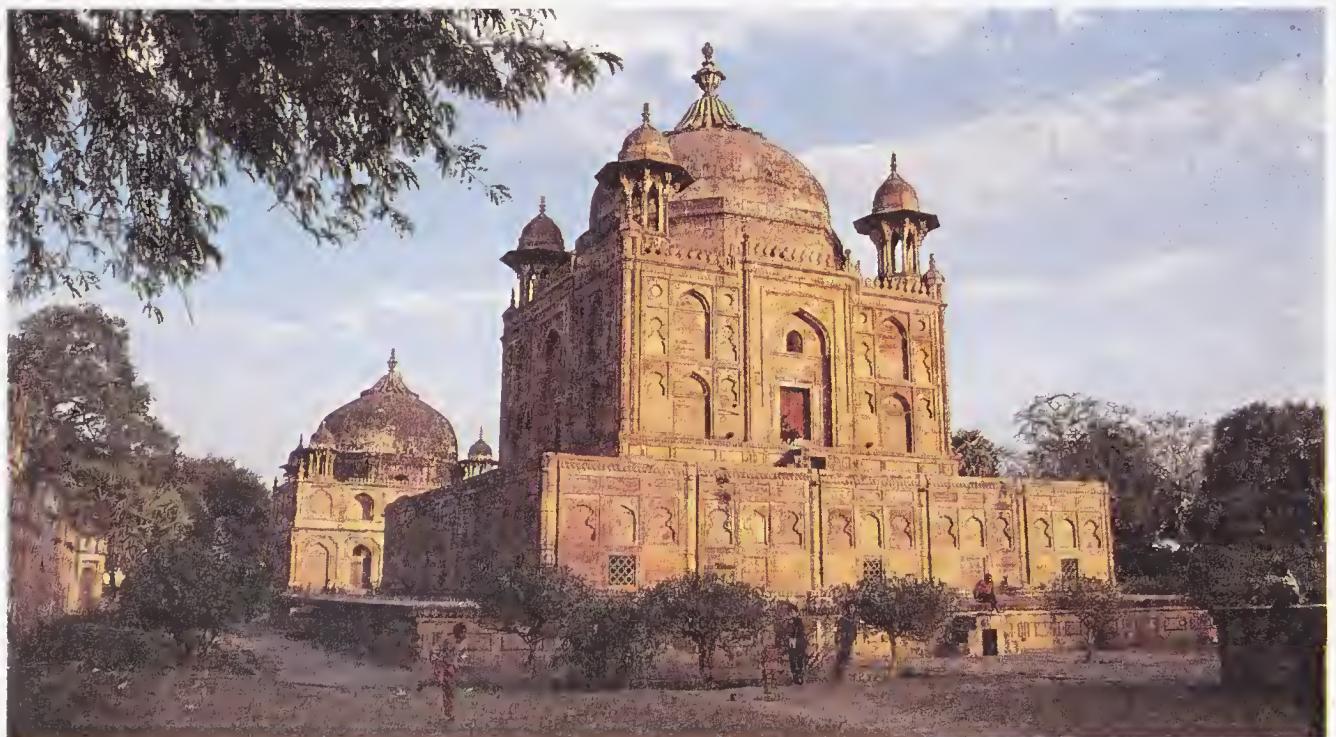
All Saints Cathedral, Civil Lines



Public Library situated in Companybagh



Jamamasjid situated in the centre of the city



Mausoleum situated in historical Khusrobagh

## PRAYAG, A CITY OF COMPOSITE CULTURE

Prayag is not only an ancient city known to exist since pre-Vedic period but also a historically significant city as evident from archaeological finds from time to time. The archaeological explorations throw interesting light on this ancient city from 8<sup>th</sup> century BC to seventh century AD.

Numerous excavated copper plates indicate that Pratishthanpuri (Jhusi) had been the capital of Kausambi, a district under Gujara-Pratihara kings of Kannauj and Kara was also under it. Alberuni had written about Akashaiyavat, the great banyan tree, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

According to the *Ling Puran*, Pratisthanpur (Jhusi) was the kingdom of King Pururva. His mother was Ila, daughter of Manu, after whom this place was named as *Ilavas*, Muslim historian Badaoni says that Akbar renamed it as *Allahavas* which was later known as Allahabad. Thus the Vedic name of Allahabad is *Prayag*, Pauranic name *Ilavas* and Muslim period name *Allahavas*, Allahabad.

The *Matsy Puran* says that the *Prayag Kshetra* is spread over five *Yojana* (40 km) from Pratisthanpur Nagar to Nagvasuki Tank where Kambal, Ashwatar and Bahumoolak group of serpents live in abundance.<sup>1</sup> But the exact location of these serpents, except Vasuki, is not known.

A look at the past glory of Prayag brings one the antiquity of Kausambi, Jhusi (Pratisthanpuri), Bheeta, Garhwa and Sringverpur.

It is said that in Jhusi Maharshi Galav had married the daughter of King Yayati and Kings Nahush, Puru, Dushyant and Bharat had ruled over this place.

Historical records show that this place was ruled by Mauryas, Shung, Kushan and Gupta Kings as well. The kings who came here in an endless procession brought with them their cultural and religious traditions which later had a fine blending with the Hindu cultural and religious traditions giving birth to a new composite culture.

The first inroad on the extensive territory of the Ganga was made by Emperor Akbar, who proceeding in a fleet of (luxuriously constructed and furnished) boats on an expedition to quell a rebellion in Bengal in the rainy season of 1572 was struck by

the dangerous potentialities of the site and ordered construction of a strong fort in the middle of the river-bed where the ancient Akshaiyavat stood, from the branches of which (in the words of Badaoni) the infidels leapt into the stream and 'went through water to the fires of hell'. Placed in this situation the fort would command the passage through both the Ganga and the Yamuna and Yamuna and Jhusi across the Ganga.

The then island of Daraganj was connected with the mainland by the magnificent Busai Bund (over a mile long) and with the Fort by another and shorter bund. A considerable area of the river bed was thus reclaimed, but being subject to flooding during the rains it remained open or sparsely peopled by hutment-dwellers, till the urban population explosion which followed World War II. Growth of housing colonies in the area has since deprived the Mela of its main camping grounds.

Akbar realised the importance of Prayag where he started practising and encouraging a composite culture, realising that without the support of Hindus he could not rule peacefully. He changed the name of Prayag as Subahi Illahabas (the province of Allah) and brought the provinces of Jaunpur, Kara-Manikpur with the territories of Bandhogarh (then ruled by Baghels) under the provincial unit of Allahabad.

The construction of Allahabad Fort had been started by Akbar in 1583 as a residential-cum-military fort and the headquarters of province was moved to Allahabad.

The British took over Allahabad in 1801. Akbar had already laid the foundation of the development of the city by constructing three protective bunds linking the fort from three sides and leaving space in its enclosures for the city's development. The British also realised the strategic importance of this city. They made Allahabad the capital of the province in 1856 shifting it from Agra when administration of the country was taken over by the Crown. The municipal board was formed in 1863.

*Allahabad revolted against the British in 1857 when Maulvi Liyaquat Ali, supported by all sections of the people, declared himself as the province governor and unfurled the independence flag on June 6, 1857 at Khusrobagh. Col. Neel subdued the revolt and on June 15, 1857 as many as 634 people were hanged by branches of a huge neem tree near Kotwali, shot dead and the bodies left hanging to create terror. Hundreds of women jumped into the wells to save their honour.*

The post-1857 era witnessed a period of great advancement. Allahabad became the cultural and educational centre of the northern provinces. The transfer of High Court

from Agra to Allahabad and the opening of the Muir Central College in the city and also the University of Allahabad in 1887 brought a new life to the city and laid the foundation of the cultural and educational advancement of the whole of northern India.

Paradoxical as it may seem, Allahabad has for centuries been a garrison town of considerable strength. The Muslim rulers of the middle ages took care to settle colonies of warlike Muslim families and clans in the religious centres of Hindus as an obvious preventive measure for rising against their rule. The British rulers for whom Allahabad was the first foot-hold on the territory of Uttar Pradesh duly maintained its military status and found in Akbar's fort here a safe refuge for their nationals dislodged from Delhi, Agra, Lucknow and other places during the war of 1857-58. After the end of this war they laid out the new cantonment to the west of the city and removed to it all troops, British and Indian and all auxiliary services, save only the cavalry which too ceased to exist after World War I. They however, still retain possession of most of the land in the Old Cantonment extending from the apex of the peninsula, where the Curzon Bridge now stands.

The national fight for freedom in 1942 brought all the faiths together. The latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave impetus to development of Hindi and Urdu. On one side were Shridhar Pathak, Pt. Balkrishna Bhatt, Madan Mohan Malaviya, Purushottam Das Tandon patronising Hindi and on the other Akbar Allahabadi, Firaq Gorakhpuri, Bismill Allahabadi, Aijaz Husain, Ehtesham Hussain and the great Prof. Zamin Ali who was the first head of the Urdu department opened in the University of Allahabad in 1924 worked for Urdu.

Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya pioneered the setting up of Benares Hindu University and Rajarshi Purushottam Das Tandon, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Anand Bhawan and Swaraj Bhawan attracted all the heroes of the national struggle for freedom and Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Ram Manohar Lohia, Dada Bhai Nauroji were frequent visitors to it.

In recent times Firaq took Urdu poetry to great heights. Of the stalwarts of mysticism in Hindi poetry Surya Kant Tripathi, "Nirala". Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma belonged to Allahabad. Dr Ram Kumar Verma of the same tradition also belonged to Allahabad.

In the great tradition of mixed or composite culture the North Central Zone Cultural Centre has been opened. This beside developing and preserving culture and art forms of the six States under the area of its operation, has been working for cultural and emotional unity.

Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Social Sciences, the Mehta Research Institute of Mathematics, Geo-Magnetic Centre and Indian Institute of Information Technology are the latest additions to give the city the status of a science city working in tandem with J. K. Institute of Applied Physics and Electronics and the Science Faculty of Allahabad University.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born on July 1, 1940, Shiva Kumar Dubey is a post-graduate in English and D Phil from the University of Allahabad. The topic of his thesis was Major Themes and Narrative Technique in the Novels of Khushwant Singh: A critical study.

By Profession, Dr Dubey is a journalist of four decades of standing having worked in different capacities in both Hindi and English newspapers and News Agency and writes freely in the two languages on social, political, religious and literary issues. His earlier book in Hindi, 'Teerthon Ka Teerth Prayag' was highly acclaimed by readers and earned him Saraswati Samman.

Dr. Dubey combines in himself the twin worlds of facts and fancy, of practical wisdom and imaginative resourcefulness.



**Centre for Cultural Resources and Training**  
Bahawalpur House, Bhagwandas Road  
New Delhi - 110001 India